CAN THE CHURCHES UNITE ?

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CAN THE CHURCHES UNITE?

The Practical Christianity Series

CAN THE CHURCHES UNITE?

ISSUED UNDER THE AUSPICES
OF THE
WORLD CONFERENCE ON
FAITH AND ORDER

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FOREWORD

The question of Christian unity was first raised by the Founder of our religion. It is God's ideal, not man's conception. It was originally put in the shape of a promise and a prophecy: "there shall be one flock, one shepherd." Then later, on the eve of our Lord's withdrawal of His visible presence and leadership, He summed it up in a prayer, twice repeated, of extraordinary beauty and intensity: "neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their world; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that Thou has sent Me. And the glory which Thou gavest Me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and

that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me."

It seems almost unnecessary to stress the need of unity. Common sense advocates it. Economy demands it. Should not all the followers of a single Person be in a common fellowship? That is what Christianity was ordained to be—a comradeship, a body of believers. The recognition of the church as the Body of Christ weighed heavily in the union of Canadian churches just consummated. Christ must have a whole and a healthy body through which to express Himself and do His saving work. A broken or a diseased body will not suffice. To this end we pray. To this end we labor.

The choicest treasures of God are in the gift only of a united church. The triumphant joy resident in unity of God's design, the glory and perfection of Christ reproduced in man, the power to win the world to God, can never be reached in a Kingdom divided against itself. We know

this now by bitter experience. Unity is no longer viewed as a distant vision but as an immediate and urgent necessity. The vitality of Christianity is being sapped by its inner dissensions. A modern Moslem, Abdullah Yusuf Ali, sees the situation as it actually is and comments on it in these words: "There is no such thing as *the* Christian religion or *a* Christian religion. Observable within Christendom are schools of thought, Church organizations, and systems of practical ethics almost as far apart as such things are in religions formally classified as different. Many phases of Unitarian thought are scarcely distinguishable from the liberal schools of Islam."

The test is at hand ready to be used: "by their fruits ye shall know them." No church has a monopoly of righteousness. All claim the power to create the Christ-like character. All succeed up to a certain point, but no one excels the other. Quaker and Roman Catholic share equal claim to the power to produce in their respective

children the righteousness of Christ. Neither can exhibit such fruits as entitle them to arrogate to themselves exclusive authority. Any unity that is in accord with the mind of Christ must give frank and full recognition to the Spirit of God working in all. Most, if not all, of the positive truths held by the various churches are rays of the Divine and must be conserved. Most, if not all, their negations are wrong and must be eliminated as barriers to unity.

It is with a catholic spirit that the essays in this volume are written. It is with the mind of Christ that we approach the coming World Conference on Faith and Order. Only trust in one another, an unprejudiced mind, and good-will toward all men will serve our purpose. Around Jesus Christ we gather in utter loyalty to Him and His clear teaching. When once we know His will, nothing remains but to embrace it joyfully. We know that it is His will that we should manifest our unity. So let us launch out into the deep with bold-

ness and with that assurance to which we are entitled that God is with us. The goal may be distant, but it is fixed and attainable. It can come only when we accept God's will as our will, God's way as our way, God's peace as our peace.

CHARLES H. BRENT,
Chairman, Continuation
Committee, World Conference on Faith and Order.

CONTENTS

PAGE

THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON FAITH AND ORDER 3
Frederick C. Morehouse

A WORLD CALL TO UNITY 12
Rev. A. W. Fortune, Ph.D.

THE TASK AT LAUSANNE 23
Professor Charles M. Jacobs, D.D.

ARE THE CHURCHES WILLING TO PAY THE PRICE? 31
Rev. William Pierson Merrill, D.D.

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES AND THE LAUSANNE CONFERENCE 44
Rev. William E. Barton, D.D., LL.D.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AS A WHOLE HAS NOTHING MORE AT HEART THAN CHRISTIAN UNITY 66
Rev. Martin J. Scott, S.J.

CANADA ANSWERS IN THE AFFIRMATIVE . 83
Rev. T. Albert Moore, D.D.

BELIEVERS IN CHRIST MUST BE ONE IN FELLOWSHIP AND SERVICE 98
Rev. John J. Banninga, D.D.

PAGE

Denominational Division Basically Misrepresents the Very Nature of Christianity 113
Rev. Alva Martin Kerr, D.D.

Our Moral Responsibility for Unity . 130
Lynn Harold Hough, Ph.D., D.D.

The Finding of a Common Standing Ground 143
E. Y. Mullins, D.D., LL.D.

The Need, Possibility, and Method of a United Church 154
David A. MacMurray, D.D.

Let Us Start the Movement Toward Unity 168
Rev. James I. Vance, D.D.

The Obstacles Can Be Overcome . . 174
Rev. Dan Freeman Bradley

The Normal Condition of Christianity is Unity 184
Rev. Peter Ainslie, D.D., LL.D.

The United Church Already Exists . 193
Rev. Frederick H. Knubel, D.D., LL.D.

How to Make Manifest the Already Existing Unity 207
The Rt. Rev. Charles P. Anderson, D.D., LL.D.

Many Mansions 221
Rev. Bishop Francis J. McConnell, D.D.

CAN THE CHURCHES UNITE?

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THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON FAITH AND ORDER

FREDERICK C. MOREHOUSE, EDITOR,
"THE LIVING CHURCH"

THE time for holding the great World Conference on Faith and Order of the Church approaches. The Christian world should be preparing for it by united prayer.

Very much of the organized Christianity of the world will be gathered into consultation. The great picturesque communions of the Orient, those who have held aloft the torch of Christianity during the many centuries in which they have been surrounded, and sometimes persecuted, by

Mohammedanism, will, by their representatives, brush the envoys of the most modern religious thought of the West. All the branches of the Anglican communion will be represented, from the venerable Church of England, planted by Celt and Latin, welded into one by Theodore the Greek, to the youngest organized churches of Japan and China. The great evangelical Protestant communions of America and Europe will be there to carry their testimony. From all—or nearly all—the races under heaven, there will be gathered a body of some five hundred representative men, each of whom is devoting some weeks of his time to act as a spokesman for that branch of organized Christianity to which he owes his allegiance. Only the great Roman communion will be unrepresented; not because it is not wanted, not because it is uninvited, not even because it is uninterested, but because its primate deemed it undesirable for the invitation to be accepted.

And what do these hope to accomplish? Let us clear the ground for the answer

to this question by eliminating some of the things that are not to be anticipated.

(1) We are a long, long way from organic Christian unity. Not only must many mooted questions be cleared up before reunion can come, but a new spirit must be created throughout the Christian world before that end can be realized. The *will to agree* must come before agreement. A careful distinction between the essential and the non-essential must first be drawn. It is a curious anomaly; but probably we must all go back in mind to the days and the conditions in which all the church was united, before we can go forward to the days in which it shall all be united again. Our ultimate hope is not for the unity of a patchwork quilt but of a seamless robe fit to clothe the Incarnate Christ. There is no part of the Christian world, past, present, or future, whose experience is not needed in the process of reuniting the church. Lausanne is to be the scene of the experience meeting of all Christendom; but it is no part of the

contemplated plan that agreement shall be anticipated from that gathering of well nigh ecumenical experience.

(2) Nobody proposes that we shall seek vague formulæ which, evading real differences, shall seem to be acceptable to all because of their very vagueness. Salvation by platitudes, justification by evasion, are not principles that can be acceptable to any part of the sundered church.

(3) Nobody proposes a unity by compromise of principles. That religious practices may be coördinated, and many and diverse of these continue side by side in a reunited church, we fully believe. Great numbers of the things that now divide us need not divide us at all. Yet fundamental principles are sacred and will be respected by the World Conference.

In my judgment, many are fearing the Lausanne Conference needlessly. No Christian body could be compromised (though perhaps it might be misrepresented by the mistakes of its own representatives), because no attempt is to be made to enact

laws or establish principles which shall be of binding force. Political conventions adopt platforms; Lausanne cannot. Ecclesiastical councils define the faith or enact disciplinary canons; Lausanne can do neither. Each body enters into conference with all others without prejudice to the position of any of them. Does some communion stand for a principle that is accepted by none of the others? Very well, all it has to do is to say so. Nobody will ask it to recede from that principle, be it held by ever so small a minority in Christendom. Neither will others be asked to accept that principle. Neither will the weak platitude be uttered that it does not (necessarily) matter whether the principle be held or not; principles *per se* matter a great deal. Opposite sets of principles must be subjects for the most careful, most sympathetic examination, but the truth or the falsity of any of them cannot and will not be determined by a majority vote.

But what then may we hope to accomplish by the Lausanne Conference?

(1) We may hope to gather together the combined religious experience of all those portions of Christendom that will coöperate for the purpose. Experience includes such matters as testimony to corporate belief, means of grace, conception of the content and value of sacraments, manner of public worship, the source of authority in religion and of rule in life, the divine plan for extending the incarnation throughout time and to enable men of all ages to participate in the atonement.

(2) We may hope to arrive at a better understanding of each other's position. There are far greater approaches to unity in the official standards of Christendom than is generally believed. Christians have drifted apart so effectually that they do not understand each other's language or way of thinking. Indeed many of them do not understand their own standards. If each body can so state its case at Lausanne that the Christian world will understand, a long step will be taken toward the day

when that case can be assimilated with all the other cases in Christendom.

Most separatist movements began with somebody's blunder, whether within or without the communion from which separation proceeded. But blunders are not always hereditary. The great-grandchildren of the men who made the original blunder are not necessarily continuing the same. Most of the separate bodies in Western Christendom are to-day in something like the eighth to the twelfth generation since separation from the original stock became effective. Is it not conceivable that the twelve-times-great-grandchildren of the two parties might be able to-day to find that there has been some correction of blunders and abuses since separation took place? And if so, may not some of the separatist bodies find that the original need for separation, as their fathers conceived it, no longer exists?

Questions like this, we are hoping, may grow out of Lausanne. The Church of

the Living God is divine in essence but human in its outward aspect. It has been subject to, not a Reformation, but a whole host of reformations, no one of which need be considered in every respect a finality. In nothing is the divine aspect of the church more evident than that there is now no church or sect or group in Christendom that might not rightly be called a reformed church. Does some devout Roman Catholic rise to deny that statement in so far as it concerns his own church? I simply point, in reply, to the fact that one of the longest chapters in the decrees of the Council of Trent is entitled *De Reformatione Ecclesiæ*. And our reason for optimism concerning the ultimate possibility of unity in the church is that the Holy Spirit is continually infusing new vitality, new ideals, new possibilities into the minds and hearts and souls of the people of God. Truth always remains truth, and its foundations cannot be moved, but in human perceptions and appreciations of truth, there is noth-

ing static. All the power of all the ultra-conservative forces in Christendom cannot stop the Holy Spirit from leading His church into all truth; and whatever is amiss in any part of His church can be corrected and made right by the slow process by which God always has chosen to accomplish His will.

The Lausanne Conference may do little more than gather and compare material and make it ready for many conferences in the future, especially between the religious bodies that find themselves nearest together. Even so it is a serious step in preparation for the larger unity that must come sometime.

And after all, results, with everything in the future, belong to God. It is our part only to try.

A WORLD CALL TO UNITY

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WE are coming to think of Switzerland in terms of movements for world fellowship. It is fitting that the little country where the League of Nations has its home should be selected as the meeting place of the World Conference on Faith and Order. This conference, which is to be held in Lausanne from July 31 to August 21, 1927, will be a meeting of far-reaching significance. Its greatness will not be indicated by the numbers in attendance, for there will be only about five hundred representatives present. These, however, will be from all the denominations of Christendom, with perhaps the exception of the Roman Catholics, and they will

consider the most important subject before the world at the present time.

The call to this conference is a challenge to Christendom to face seriously the problem of division and strife in the church. This is stated in a masterly way in "The Call to Unity" drafted by the Continuation Committee for consideration by the conference when held: "This Conference calls the Christian world to increased and more definite efforts for a greater unity of Christendom and for a deeper penitence with regard to the disunion of the Churches, and records its conviction that nothing but the most heart-stirring motives are adequate to inspire and carry through such efforts." This call to all communions to coöperate in the conference challenges every Christian to remember four important things: "(a) the New Testament teaching that the Church should reflect the unity of God; (b) the impulse of the Holy Spirit within the Church and in their own hearts, making towards unity; (c) the purpose of the Lord, that through His

Church the non-Christian world should be converted and all human society purified and inspired, a purpose which cannot be fulfilled but by a united Church; and (d) the strength and violence of the antagonistic forces of our day, which cannot be met but by a united Church."

When we remember how long the church has been at the task and how much remains to be done, we must feel that there is something wrong with the church itself. When we realize how little the church is doing to help solve the problems with which the world is struggling in our day, and then face the fact that the main reason why it does not do more is the division in its forces, we must feel that the imperative call is to closer unity. When we understand the purpose of the World Conference on Faith and Order, we must be more sectarian than Christian if our souls do not respond to this call to the Christian world for "more definite efforts for a greater unity of Christendom."

Unity cannot be forced upon the church.

There is no formulated plan on the basis of which the various denominations can or will unite. These divisions came through long processes and cannot be lightly disregarded. The first step toward unity is a better understanding on the part of the leaders of the different communions. The differences have been magnified by misunderstanding and by the controversies of centuries. The great need is a frank consideration of the things on which we differ as well as those on which we agree.

Understanding and sympathy in religion are imperative needs in our day. If we assume that we have all truth we have limited Christianity to our own group. The writer would call upon the members of his own communion to hear the words of their pioneer leader, Alexander Campbell: "This plan of making our own nests and fluttering over our own brood; of building our own tents and of confining all goodness and grace to our noble selves and to the elect few who are like us, is the quintessence of sublimated Pharisaism.

. . . To lock ourselves up in the bandbox of our own little circle, to associate with a few units, tens or hundreds, as the pure church, as the elect, is real Protestant monkery—is evangelical Pharisaism."

The five hundred representatives of practically all the denominations of Christendom who will meet at Lausanne will recognize each other as belonging to the church of God, and that is a long step in the direction of unity. For three weeks they will demonstrate the spirit of unity. That meeting is rightly designated as a conference. There will be a serious attempt to understand the situation and try to find a way out of the world's religious confusion. There will be a frank statement of convictions with a view to mutual understanding. There will be an honest effort to find what others have that is of permanent value which we also need. There will be an honest effort to find out what is the will of God, for in a conference of this sort men will want to be led of God, and when they follow divine leading they

will find that they are walking in paths that converge. When the World Conference on Faith and Order was born, those who launched the movement said, "Our one hope of mutual understanding is in taking personal counsel together in the spirit of love and forbearance."

In the present situation the conference method is of fundamental importance in preparing the way for closer unity. Writing books and making speeches help, but they are not sufficient. To understand the real situation and find some basis of closer coöperation there must be the give and take which only obtains in conference. It is in conference that we come to understand each other.

The conference at Lausanne is to be on faith and order, which are of fundamental importance. These are the things beneath the surface which really divide us and keep us apart. There will be differences in the conference in regard to what should be required in faith. Some will insist on the acceptance of the Apostles' Creed and the

Nicene Creed. There will be those who will repeat the slogan, "No Creed but the Bible." Some will maintain that the acceptance of the simple confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," should be sufficient.

There will be different theories in regard to the ministry. There will be those who will maintain that the ministry gets its authority from above and is superior to the church and that all ministers must be ordained by bishops. There will be those who will maintain that the ministry has evolved out of the needs of the church and derives its authority from the church, and hence all ordinations should be recognized.

In conference there must be absolute sincerity, and differences must not be minimized. All must listen respectfully to those who advocate conceptions that are meaningless to them, for they themselves will undoubtedly advocate ideas that are meaningless to others. The truth will be found after much exchange of opinions.

Perhaps we may not be as far apart as we think we are, for changes have been coming rapidly. The books on doctrine that have been written in recent years have been undenominational, and in many of the large seminaries ministerial students of all communions have common fellowship in their training.

Conference rather than controversy is the road to unity. Debate tends to widen the breach, but conference leads to understanding. Cardinal Newman once wrote, "Truth is the outcome of many minds working together freely." There is too much bitter controversy in our day over matters of faith. The meeting at Lausanne will not be for debate where the representatives of each communion will try to defend their own positions, for progress is not made in that way. Differences will not be minimized, for a conference must be characterized by honesty and sincerity if there is to be mutual understanding. Points of agreement will be emphasized,

and those who participate in the conference will be amazed to see how much common ground there is.

The conference will be characterized by open-mindedness, for that is essential for progress toward unity. Those who participate in the conference will not assume that their particular denominations possess all the truth, for, if they believed that, they would not feel the need of being there. They will not be unwilling to recognize their errors, for they will have the spirit of conference rather than debate.

The World Conference on Faith and Order will be attended by only about five hundred people, but God's method of progress is through the few who have caught the vision. It has been the faithful remnant that has saved the world in the time of need. Dr. Frederick Lynch, in *The Christian Unity Movement in America*, expresses the longing for a new prophet of unity. He says, "I sometimes wonder whether if suddenly, under the impulse of

some great, holy cause, some new crusade, perhaps led by some new prophet of the Lord, a great and holy passion for Jesus Christ possessed the whole church, it might not be so consuming, so touched with heavenly wonder, that in the absorbing love and devotion to the Lord all its citizens might forget all about their denominations and remember only that they are citizens of Heaven." It may be that some such prophets will receive their anointing at Lausanne.

This conference will have no power to legislate or adopt resolutions binding on the participating bodies. The conclusions of the conference, however, will be discussed by the churches around the world, and the spirit manifested in the calling of the conference will do much to promote the cause of unity in the church. The church could do no more important thing during the next year than to emphasize the spirit which makes for unity. We would do well to emphasize the sentiment of those lines

in the *Eirenicon* which was published in 1656 in the interest of the union of Protestant forces:

Let's bear with one another, and all pray
Causes of difference may be washt away . . .
And let it be our labor to increase
Oneness of spirit in the bond of peace.

THE TASK AT LAUSANNE

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THE World Conference on Faith and Order is attempting a tremendous task. The most vigorous imagination is unequal to picturing the consequences that would flow from its complete success. For the conference seeks to prepare the way for the union of all the Christian forces of the world now divided, and often dissipated, through almost numberless organizations, each of which is a church, but none of which can rightly claim to be the one and only, all-inclusive church. The history of the church can scarcely record another enterprise of similar magnitude.

The way to success lies over the most formidable difficulties. Some of these are, for the present and for a long time to

come, quite insuperable. The Roman Church will not be a participant at Lausanne, and there are Protestant churches, in Europe and America, that will not be represented there. The promoters of the conference and its supporters are not disturbed by this. The most sanguine enthusiasts for the conference are not looking for immediate success. Their highest hopes for 1927 will be realized, if a gathering shall be held that will fairly represent the major portion of non-Roman Christendom. To gain even that will be a real achievement. If, in addition, the delegates, assembled at Lausanne, shall agree upon a small body of fundamental principles, as a basis and a guide for future action, the conference will have accomplished all that could possibly have been expected of it.

To throw unnecessary obstacles in the way of an enterprise so vast and so worth while, would be a sin; the necessary obstacles are already large enough. Nevertheless it is quite clear that the conference, if it is to succeed at all, must face certain

great questions, and face them squarely. It may be well to note what some of these questions are.

The primary question is doubtless that concerning the nature and purpose of the church. It would be waste of time and energy to move toward the union of many churches into one church, unless it were known beforehand what that one church was to be and to do. On this question there are two types of opinion. Either they must be harmonized, or one of them must be abandoned. The one may be called the national type, though the name may be somewhat misleading. The adherents of this view look upon the church as an institution more or less parallel with the state. As the state ministers to the temporal needs and coördinates the temporal activities of all its citizens, so the church should minister to the spiritual needs and coördinate the religious activities of all the people within the area that it covers. Within such a church, large latitude may be allowed for differences of belief. It may have its

liberal and conservative wings, just as the state may have its liberal and conservative parties, but each party must recognize the other's right to be included in the church. The most extreme advocates of this type of opinion would go so far as to deprive the church of creeds, on the ground that creeds are exclusive, and the church must be inclusive. This conception of the church is essentially European-Protestant. It is the view that justifies the state-church system. The church is the worshiping nation, or the worshiping community; within one nation, or one community, there must be only one church.

Over against this view of the church stands another which may be called the confessional view. Those who hold this view think of the church as a community of like-minded people, who worship together and work together and erect their institution together, because they believe alike. They insist that the institution is secondary and the faith is primary; that the faith must create the institution, and that the

institution is salt without savor, chaff without grain, when it ceases to stand for truth. They hold that testimony to the truth as it is in Christ Jesus is, in the last analysis, the only function which the church really has. This view of the church has historically dominated American Christianity, and is the justification for denominationalism. It has been expected, in the past, that a man's beliefs should be fairly indicated by naming the church to which he belonged. The churches stood, and were known to stand, for different bodies of conviction.

These two views of the church are certain to meet in the Lausanne Conference. One or the other of them a Protestant must hold. There is indeed a third view, which combines them both. It is that of Roman Catholicism, which exalts the institution to the *n*th degree, and makes it the divinely appointed custodian of the truth. To the Roman Catholic the church is one organization, existing by God's will, and teaching with supreme authority a definite doc-

trine. The conference will not adopt the Roman view of the church. Will it adopt the national, or the confessional? Or will it find a "middle way"?

It seems quite certain that the middle ground will be sought; whether it will be found is the all-important question. Christendom as a whole will not put organization first and conviction second. The gathering at Lausanne must declare some form or creed, or, at least, it must prepare the way for creedal declaration. The delegates must ask themselves: "What degree of unity of faith actually exists among us now? What things do all of us, or what things do most of us, believe?" By the answers to these questions the world conference movement must stand or fall. No other method of procedure offers the smallest prospect of success. Let the delegates express to one another their heart-felt convictions concerning the vital truths of the gospel. Let them tell each other what they believe about God

and Christ, sin and salvation, the Bible and the creeds. It is practically certain that their first agreements will be too small to form a basis for any union of churches. On the other hand there is a great body of common conviction which already inwardly unites Christians who seem outwardly to be widely separated. Let that common conviction come to full expression, and let it be laid before the Christian world as a testimony to the great truths of our holy faith.

There is a very large section of Protestant Christendom, in Europe and America, that is hoping and praying that this may be done. It includes many who are not now interested in questions of organizations, orders, union, or reunion; it also includes many whose churches will not be represented at Lausanne, largely because of the fear that the conference will avoid the greatest questions. Let that fear be removed by a clear and unmistakable testimony to fundamental historic Christian

truth, and the movement which the conference represents will gain enormously in power.

The way to the goal which the conference has set itself is very long. One generation is far too short a time in which to traverse it; two generations or three may pass before any very great progress can be recorded. The main thing is that the start shall be made along the right path, the path of testimony to the faith.

ARE THE CHURCHES WILLING TO PAY THE PRICE?

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CAN the churches unite?

Yes, they can if they are willing to pay the price.

The first condition of an intelligent approach to any question is a clear understanding of what the question means. What do we mean, what are we looking for, when we ask: can the churches unite?

There is an immense amount of confusion in the minds of good people as to the kind and extent of unity which is practicable and desirable in religious affairs, and as to how it can be achieved.

There is general agreement among well disposed and generous religious folk on the abstract proposition that the churches of Christ ought to have and manifest a real unity, such as would prevent competition and overlapping, and make the church of Christ a positive force and a unifying principle in our common life. But when we begin to consider details, or even outlines, of possible plans, we fall at once into confusion.

That delightful soul, Charles Lamb, was once asked by a friend if he was musical. He answered, "Sentimentally I am disposed to harmony, but organically I am incapable of a tune." One thinks of that response when he studies the attitude of ecclesiastical bodies toward church unity. Sentimentally they are disposed to harmony, but organically they are incapable of a tune. And until church unity moves up and in, from being something sentimental, to become something organic, it means little or nothing. It is just a castle in the clouds.

Begin, then, by delimiting the field of discussion.

First of all, we confine our attention to America, leaving out the rest of the world. "There's enough to do at home," in this matter. And while the problem of Christian unity the world over is vastly important, our immediate responsibility is here in America.

We shall be wise also to confine our thought to the Protestant groups in our country. No one who has any large-hearted and generous vision for the future can fail to dream of a day when the great Catholic Church and the many Protestant churches may come together in a real unity. But there is a real and deep difference between the Catholic and the Protestant views of the church and of religion which makes unity hopeless for the present. Great changes must come, on the one side and the other, or on both, before the hope of union is more than a mirage.

Here then is the immediate and practical question: can the Protestant churches

of America really get together in an effective working unity? Again we answer: yes, if they are willing to pay the price.

What the exact form of that unity may be no one can foresee with assurance. It need not be, many of us are sure it cannot be, the unity of a single, tightly knit, authoritative organization. Large numbers of Protestants would count such a unity a doubtful blessing. It may be that some form of federal union will be the best solution of the problem. It is more than likely that the successful form will be one which no one now foresees.

Certain things seems clear, however. One of them is that no one existing church body can hope to absorb all the others. The "*varieties* of religious experience" have their value. Not all men think alike, or worship alike, thank God! No one existing denomination has the slightest right to hope that unity can ever come through the absorption of all other varieties of Christian into that one variety of faith and order.

A wealthy man residing in the South was pestered by continual demands for money on the part of several negro churches located near his home. At last, one day, he said to one applicant: "I'm tired of giving a few dollars here and a few dollars there, to keep a half-dozen little churches, where there ought to be only one. I'll tell you what I'll do. So long as those churches hold apart, I'll not give one of them another dollar. But if they will form just one church, I'll promise five hundred dollars a year." The negro minister leaned forward and said earnestly, "Mister, you give me that five hundred dollars, and I'll run all the other churches out of business." There are some who hope for ultimate unity in some such way. It cannot come in that way. It will never come through one denomination crowding out or absorbing the others.

Nor will it come through an iron-clad uniformity, a church with the lid clamped tight on individual or group preferences and convictions. God forbid!

What is needed is a real unity, however, achieved and realized, that shall insure the effective meeting of such needs as these, by a united church:

(1) The pressing, painful need of religious and ethical training as a part of common-school education.

Our schools are established for the fostering of a right type of American citizenship. Only on that basis can we justify the expenditure of public funds for education. For its right development the state needs the right sort of men and women. It is the function of the schools and colleges to produce such men and women. It is becoming increasingly evident that we cannot get the right sort of citizens unless religion is a part of their training. It is evident also that the schools must be kept clear of ecclesiastical domination, and that the religion and ethics there inculcated cannot be that of a special group, nor can they be markedly of a special color or flavor.

Only a united church, free from sec-

tarian self-seeking, can effectively back up the right demand for religious training, and coöperate freely with the schools.

(2) The need of a non-competitive religion in small towns, a Christianity that can unite neighbors, instead of splitting them into little companies each of which has an exaggerated group-consciousness.

The community church is trying to meet that need. Community churches are rapidly increasing in number and influence. Yet the community church has serious defects, which can never be overcome until the great divisions of Protestant Christianity are in heart and spirit one. A community church cuts itself off from that world view, from that international coöperation, which contributes so much to the Christian spirit, the generous sacrificial spirit, of the church of Christ. One such church proudly displayed this motto: "The community church is interested only in its community." Its danger is that it may become the apotheosis of parochialism.

Yet fundamentally the community church idea is right. Small towns ought to have one strong Christian church, rather than three or four struggling ones. For that reason, a true working unity of Christian bodies is imperatively needed.

(3) Unity is needed also in the interests of common speech and action in great common causes. The church speaks now with divided voice. That means weakness.

Now what hope is there for the outworking of such a practical unity? Is there any hope? My answer is: there is no hope at all, if the churches go on as they are; there is every reason for hope, if they repent and follow Christ.

I am sure I see certain simple steps which every denomination of Christians might take now if it would, the taking of which would bring us all appreciably nearer unity.

Over thirty years ago, in a conference of representatives of various church bodies, meeting in Philadelphia, I heard a leading Episcopalian clergyman outline the next

steps toward church unity. He said that what was immediately needed was, first, that each body of Christians should make up its mind honestly and impartially what it considered essential to a Christian church; and then that each should put itself courageously on that basis.

I still think that is the right way. If every Christian denomination defined clearly to itself what it holds essential to a Christian church, and then put itself on that basis, we should be well on the way to church unity.

But, in fact, each body of Christians holds to something which it would not dare declare to be essential to Christianity. There is not a body of Christians in America in which there is not a strong party that holds tenaciously to something which is not essential to Christianity. And whenever we make the church more than Christian, we make it other than Christian.

It is a startling fact that three of the issues over which churches have fought and divided for thirty years past, and

are still contending and dividing—the inerrancy of the Bible, the virgin birth of Christ, and the apostolic succession of the ministry—are all matters on which Christ never insisted, indeed matters as to which He never gave a hint that they interested Him at all.

What right has a "denomination" to exist? Only as a serious attempt to realize the universal church of Christ. For any branch of the church to hold as essential anything it does not consider essential to the universal church is a crime. It is insubordination toward Jesus Christ, the One Great Head of the Church.

Here rises up the man who offers the specious plea: "I do not want a church of minimums. Let each of us bring into the united church all our rich heritage." Exactly. Let the one church be as rich and varied as possible. But when you talk of *essentials*, you must talk of minimums. We shall never have unity until, while we *encourage* variety and richness, we *demand* only the simple essentials of

Christianity. When it comes to the essentials on which we are to insist as a basis of union, we must get to the minimums. There is no other way.

We see this clearly enough with regard to Americanism. We welcome men from various nations, and are glad to have our national life enriched with all they can bring to us from their heritage. But we make the essentials of naturalization simple and natural and vital.

So it should be with our Christianity. We need a church which welcomes rich variety, but demands only the simple essentials.

Will the churches take this attitude? That is the decisive question. Just so soon as the Presbyterian Church will receive as a valid minister in its own body any one it considers a true minister of Jesus Christ, whatever his particular doctrinal position; just so soon as the Episcopal Church will give full recognition to all ministers it believes Christ would recognize, whatever the form of their ordina-

tion; just so soon as all denominational bodies demand only what they honestly believe Christ demands, church unity will be possible. And not till then.

All that is needed is to say, as the apostles said it, and mean it, as they meant it, that Jesus Christ is "Head of all things to the Church," "the only name in which we may be saved," and then do as He says, judge as He judges, insist on nothing save that on which He insists.

So long as we hold as essential anything which Jesus Christ our Lord does not clearly count essential, so long we make unity impossible, however fervently we hope and pray and work for it, and so long, in a very real and serious fashion, we deny our Lord and impair our own Christian standing. And just so soon as the great denominations of the Protestant Church in America become possessed of a spirit that will lead them to be content with "the simplicity which is in Christ," they will find their way to a practical, effective, real working unity.

Can the churches unite? Yes, if they will pay the price. And the price is complete faith in, and obedience to, our Lord Jesus Christ.

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES AND THE LAUSANNE CONFERENCE

REV. WILLIAM E. BARTON, D.D., LL.D., FORMER MODERATOR, NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

THE National Council of Congregational Churches in its biennial meeting at Washington in October, 1925, voted to be represented in the Lausanne meeting in August, 1927, and delegated to its executive committee the choice of the six delegates and six alternates who are to represent the Congregational churches there. The executive committee has elected the nucleus of its delegation and expects to complete the selection within the next few months. It was designed to make early choice of a small group who might be at-

tending to any required preliminaries, and to fill the delegation with carefully selected men who could probably attend, and who, with the men already chosen, would represent the Congregational churches adequately. It is hoped that both the delegates and the alternates will be able to be present. As one of those first elected I am asked to write a short article concerning the spirit in which the Congregational churches will anticipate that gathering. I am glad to accept, reminding myself and my readers that these delegates will go uninstructed, and that no man has any authority to say how any of them will speak or vote, or what attention, if any, the National Council and the Congregational churches will pay to his or their proceedings after the conference shall have adjourned. And yet I am confident that I can tell truthfully the general attitude of the Congregational churches toward this and like movements, and what subjects they would like to hear discussed and what work they would care to see accom-

plished. As for their official attitude, those churches, and the National Council, are on record in the action taken at Springfield, Massachusetts, in 1923; and that, broadly speaking, will be the charter of the Congregational delegates.

I do not think the Congregational churches are likely to be greatly interested in the discussion of creedal forms. They do not care very much about the wording of creeds. They do not despise creeds. There is a sense in which they hold them in high esteem. They even recite one, now and then. A microscopic and perhaps diminishing minority of the Congregational churches recite the so-called Apostles' Creed once a Sunday, a few members repeating it from memory, a larger proportion reading it from a slip printed or pasted into the hymn-book, and some quietly standing without either protest or participation. If a new minister comes to a church and tells the deacons he thinks it would be well to add the Apostles' Creed to the order of service, there usually is no

objection. If the next minister omits it, as he probably will, and makes a new order of service without it, few if any of his congregation will miss it. Congregationalists will repeat this or almost any creed if they find it in the order of service of a church they are visiting; but they do not grow enthusiastic about it, and they would resist, almost to the last man, any attempt to make that creed or any creed obligatory. They think all the creeds have been more interested in speculating about the nature of Jesus than they have been in trying to express the truths that Jesus really was interested in teaching. Their objection to creeds, so far as they object, does not grow out of their unbelief, but rather out of their belief. They do not like to say, "He descended into hell," because they do not believe it, any more than the people who say it glibly believe it in any present connotation of hell; and Congregationalists do not like too many mental footnotes. They do not like to say, "I believe in the resurrection of the body," for obvious

reasons. Being people of good sense, they do not take their objections so literally as to raise a disturbance, but they know that creeds are not a sure means of securing either orthodoxy or honesty. Historically the Congregational churches had no creeds. Each church had a little covenant, and some of these covenants embodied a very short creed. The use of this was so flexible that in many churches each new minister wrote his own form, sometimes submitting it to the local church for approval, sometimes not even reading it over in advance to his deacons. There was nothing sacred about the words. John Doe, uniting with the First Church of Smithville, promised to be a loyal and faithful member of that church, and of the church of Christ, and confessed his faith in Christ in the form which the local church had grown to use.

The Congregational churches, in the days of the Unitarian Controversy, attempted to guard orthodoxy with rigid creeds. It was a sad blunder, and they are not likely to repeat it. They have

creeds. There is a little creed, written by Dr. Quint on his hat as the National Council of 1865 was on its way from Boston to Plymouth, saying that the Congregational churches are still loyal to the essential faith of the Pilgrim Fathers. That was read at Plymouth, and approved, with one negative note; we are always proud to have one good thundering no. But nobody ever proposed to make the Burial Hill Confession a part of any regular order of service. In 1880 the National Council appointed a commission of twenty-five outstanding men to prepare a confession of faith. Twenty-three of them agreed upon one, and it was submitted in 1883 and is held in high respect; but it simply registers a high-water mark. Nobody uses it. In 1913 the National Council adopted as a part of the preamble of its new Constitution a very short statement of faith, which is used in perhaps a majority of our churches; thank God there is no way of finding out how many use it and how many prefer not to do so. When we need a creed

we make one, and we know better than to worship the work of our hands. Still more do we object to worshiping the work of other men's hands. When our creed no longer meets our needs, we do not rudely cast it aside. We simply write another.

Some other denominations are, as we think, less fortunate than we in this particular. They believe what we believe. Their conservatives march with our conservatives, and their liberals are abreast of our liberals. We all have access to the same book-stores. We all have about the same range of minds. The denominations that have creeds simply put a new patch on the old wine-skin, and if it holds, that is their affair; with us, bottles are cheap, and we get a new one. But we draw our wine from the same presses.

So we are ready to discuss faith and profess faith, and we like to meet and confer with brethren who have obtained like precious faith with us, but we prefer not to waste much time on either side of the ocean discussing creedal forms.

And we rather hope that not much time will be wasted discussing the history of the early church. If that must be discussed, we Congregationalists will be there with our proof texts, and will prove that the early churches were independent self-governing bodies like ourselves. But while we believe this, and think we can prove it, we do not count it of prime importance. We cannot discover that the Lord Jesus cared much about the form of organization; and when some one tells us that as He talked with His disciples after the resurrection concerning "the kingdom of God," and in those conversations may be presumed to have outlined a plan of church government, we have hard work trying not to smile at the absurdity of it. Then we sober down, and say that if He did at that time outline a system of church government, His disciples went out and organized good Congregational churches. But this is not a matter over which we care to waste much time. The questions, "Did Jesus establish a church? If so, who besides me are it?"

do not interest us. We hope they will not appear at Lausanne.

Congregationalists believe in apostolic succession, and if it be manifest in rows of heads and hands, they think they have it, but they care more about the succession of the apostolic spirit. They believe that they have a valid ordination and a valid and apostolic episcopate, preserved in its original intent in its presbytery, and they can bring the witness of even popes to bear upon the validity of this claim; as Dr. Briggs so well reminded his fellow-Episcopalians, no pope has ever declared Congregational orders invalid. But the Congregational churches simply do not care what popes think about their orders. If the Congregational churches knew that the pope stood ready to validate their orders, they would never pay the expenses of their six delegates from Lausanne through the smoky Alpine tunnels to Rome to get the rubber stamp of the pope. This is not because they hate the pope; they would rather have his good will than his

ill will; but their own right to preach the gospel and administer the sacraments does not depend on his permission. So they lose interest when any denomination says to them, "We rather want union with you, but we can go no farther with you than we can at the same time go with Rome." They are not likely to go very far in that three-legged race.

Congregationalists claim for themselves, for the apostolic character of their forms of organization, for the validity of their ordination, for the authority of their episcopate, for the sanctity of their sacraments, all that they can ever admit as belonging to any other group or denomination. Have they apostolic succession, bishops, priests, and the real Presence? We have no more. But these churches which originally took no name, but have permitted themselves to be called congregational, either with a large or small "c," because they had to acknowledge, and were glad to acknowledge, other churches of Christ, with divergent forms of organiza-

tion, claim no monopoly either of organization or of grace.

This is a point on which Congregationalists want to be plainly understood. It is sometimes said to them, or implied in suggestions looking toward unity: "We can admit your essential claims, because you do not claim very much. We admit your liberty of prophesying, and your possession of spiritual grace, but you do not claim a sacrificing priesthood; your ministry is prophetic, not priestly. And you make an ordinance of that which to us is a sacrament. Moreover you concede that we are *a* church of Christ, and it would not be very hard for you to admit that we are *the* church of Christ, and we are not very sure whether we can admit that you are *a* church, but we are trying hard to find a way to say something which will meet the little that you claim for yourselves."

Be it understood that no apparent modesty of claim for our right to exist as valid churches is ever to be interpreted as

implying that we can concede to other organizations more than we claim for ourselves. If we magnify the prophetic function of our ministry, we still claim for it all the priesthood which we can ever concede to any other ministry, and we could not receive any validation of it at the hand of any ecclesiastic from the pontiff up, save as a courtesy that might possibly facilitate a better working relationship. We are not so modest as we seem. Stir us up, and we are most stubbornly arrogant. But happily that is not our prevailing mood, nor the one in which our delegates will go to Lausanne. The clergy among our delegates will wear no ecclesiastical robes and display no ecclesiastical titles, but let no man in their presence profess to be more a bishop than they.

One reason why Congregationalists are not more enthusiastic about conferences is that they have not reserved for themselves anything to trade with. They cannot say to the Baptists, "If you will admit to your communion table the vast majority

of the followers of Christ, whom you now exclude because they were never as wet as you were just once, we will admit your minority to our communion table." They cannot say this, because the Baptists are already welcome there. Nor can Congregationalists say to the Episcopalians, "If you whose organic name is Protestant (and if any of your members are ashamed of so worthy a name that is no affair of ours) will receive at our altar the bread and the cup which we bless in Christ's name, you will be welcome, and we shall be glad to come to yours," for the Episcopalians are already welcome. If Congregationalists knew how to be any more nearly union in form and spirit than they are, they would not wait for Lausanne; they would do it now. That is where we are at a disadvantage. When some other denomination removes the sacred dot from one of its "i's" or the venerable cross from one of its historic "t's" to edge painfully a quarter of an inch toward us, and asks us how far we will come, we simply do not know what

to answer. So far as we know, we are already there.

Now, what would interest Congregationalists more than anything else would be a discussion at Lausanne as to how we Christian churches could get to work to carry out some effective plan of living and working together on an absolute level of recognition and good-will. I venture even to quote from Robert Browne, a man of whom neither Congregationalists nor Episcopalians are very proud, yet who deserves some gratitude from both; Congregationalists would be interested in discussions of what might be done, here and now, by the denominations that are actually and cordially represented at Lausanne, "without tarrying for anie."

Might not the Lord's table be thrown open at once, yes, instantly, to every man and woman who confesses Jesus Christ? Who has a right to forbid? To Congregationalists close communion seems (I hope I seem to speak charitably) a sin against the Holy Ghost. It is the denial of the

grace of Christ where Christ most specifically promised it and where He most certainly manifests it. What man will dare deny true sacramental grace as existing, let us say, at the altars of Methodists and Presbyterians? To a Congregationalist it seems a thing more wicked than I can characterize in terms that would seem courteous to say to Baptists and Lutherans, "Because you do not in your ordinary speech call those 'bishops' who ordain, we declare Christ to be absent from your altars." To Congregationalists it seems that every shutting of a reverent soul away from the altars of God is profanation; and we affectionately but earnestly call on every sect that practises close communion to repent of that cardinal sin, and meet us and other Christian groups at Christ's table wherever it is spread.

And we should like to discuss how Christian missions may present a unified front to the pagan world, and how church extension in our own land may be without

competition. We should be willing, we six or possibly twelve Congregational delegates, uninstructed though we be, and unauthorized to put our denomination on record, to lift our right hands to heaven, with the rest of the conference, and say, "We will not knowingly permit home or foreign missionary money to be used in planting in any Christian community a church or mission that must live in competition with other Christian churches or missions of whatever name, so help us God." If the conference at Lausanne should take such an oath, and the Congregational delegates should participate in it, as they would, and they should return and report the fact to the next meeting of the National Council, I think I know the Connecticut lawyer who would rise and say, "Mr. Moderator, our delegates have outrageously exceeded their authority, and I move we give them a hearty vote of thanks." That vote, I think, would carry, without more than one dissenting vote. It

would break our Congregational hearts if any such motion could go through with entire unamimity.

Some of the Congregational delegates to Lausanne will be laymen and some will be ministers. The laymen will be men of experience and wisdom; the ministers will be men who have served the Congregational churches in responsible positions; and all will be men who are trusted. They will go ready to learn as well as to impart, and if the churches approve what they say or do, the churches will find ways of expressing their approbation through the National Council. Otherwise they will have had what I hope will be for all of us a comfortable journey with no great harm done.

In what I have said thus far, I have spoken as one delegate, giving his own opinion. Such a statement as this undertakes to be should conclude with the authoritative utterance of our National Council, which, while it does not bind our local churches, does and will bind the delegates, who are appointed by the authority

of the Council. And so far as I know, no one has denied, or is likely to deny, that this Declaration on Unity represents the mind of our Congregational churches, both as to their ministry and laity.

The following declaration of the National Council of Congregational Churches in the United States was adopted at Springfield, Massachusetts, in October, 1923, and is the basis upon which the Congregational delegates to the Lausanne Conference are authorized to proceed:

DECLARATION ON UNITY

The Congregational Churches of the United States, by delegates in National Council assembled, viewing with sorrow the sectarian divisions existing in Christendom, and earnestly desiring that in the midst of a divided and hostile world, there may be a friendly and united Church, hail with unfeigned joy every indication of approach to union in the visible body of Christ. Believing that in the present condition of opinion in the Church and in the world, a declaration of our own position as a branch of the Holy Catholic Church will have value both

in preventing futile and ill-advised attempts at impossible and undesirable approaches to forms of uniformity without the spirit of oneness in Christ, and also in furthering every feasible approach toward an outward and visible expression of the unity of the Spirit which underlies all denominational differences, hereby set forth our historic and present attitude toward the unity of the Church of Christ.

I. We believe that the basis of all Christian unity is unity in the Spirit of Christ; and that all men who are in Christ are one, and are members of the Holy Catholic Church, however wide and deep may be their apparent separation in race, nationality or history, in rite or ceremonial or creed. We believe that all external unity, if valid, must inhere in this fundamental unity. "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling."

II. The Congregational Churches believe and affirm that they are true churches of the Lord Jesus Christ with a valid, apostolic, prophetic and priestly ministry; and we cannot recognize in any organization a more valid ministry or a higher ecclesiastical authority than that which we possess as a branch of the Holy Catholic Church. This faith, however, we hold in the

broadest catholicity, affirming with those who established this National Council:

"As little as did our fathers in their day, do we in ours make pretensions to be the only churches of Christ. We find ourselves consulting and acting together under the distinctive name of Congregationalists, because, in the present condition of our common Christianity, we have felt ourselves called to ascertain, and do, our own appropriate part of the work of Christ's Church among men. We especially desire, in prosecuting the common work of evangelizing our own land and world, to observe the common and sacred law, that in the wide field of the world's evangelization, we do our work in friendly coöperation with all those who love and serve our common Lord. We believe in the Holy Catholic Church. It is our prayer and endeavor that the unity of the Church may be more and more apparent, and that the prayer of our Lord for His disciples may be speedily and completely answered and all be one; and that by consequence of this Christian unity in love, the world may believe in Christ as sent of the Father to save the world."

III. We stand ready to meet any approach toward closer visible union with other branches

of the Christian Church upon a level plane of mutual good will and mutual recognition of prerogative. We will meet any duly constituted Church of Jesus Christ with full recognition of its authority and of the validity of a ministry ordained with intent to convey authority to preach the gospel and minister the ordinances of the Church in accordance with the commands of our Lord Jesus Christ. We will and do receive members from other churches as we receive them from our own churches. We will not and do not call common that which God hath cleansed, nor deny spiritual efficacy where God has manifested His Spirit. We hold in honor the name by which this group of churches has come to be called, a name descriptive of our form of government; but we will hold to no distinctive name if by mutual abandonment of denominational titles we may be permitted without apparent arrogance or misrepresentation to resume the name by which our churches historically were called, the "Churches of Christ" in their several localities. We hold dear certain forms in which we are accustomed to confess our faith, but we have never used and will never use a creed for purposes of division or exclusion.

We cannot by the abandonment of our name or the disregard of our historic symbols effect immediate union with other branches of the Church of Christ. But we are ready to go forward as the Spirit of Christ shall lead us, into the larger unities of the Kingdom of God.

As we cannot permit creeds to be imposed upon us, so we will impose no divisive creeds upon others. We will seek not every church its own things, but every church also the things of others. This only will we ask, and this we freely offer, that unitedly we will confess and serve our common Lord, and love one another as He gave us commandment.

IV. And if this vision tarry, even now and until it is fully come, will we live in the spirit and hope of its accomplishment. We will refrain from planting new churches that must compete with Christian churches already organized. We will treat all Christians as Christians, and all Christian ministers as ministers of Christ, and all Christian churches as churches of the Lord Jesus Christ; we will pray for and seek to promote the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, to the honor of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AS A WHOLE HAS NOTHING MORE AT HEART THAN CHRISTIAN UNITY

REV. MARTIN J. SCOTT, S.J., CHURCH OF ST. FRANCIS XAVIER, NEW YORK

IT is not infrequently charged against the Catholic Church that she holds aloof from endeavors toward Christian unity. This is a serious charge and deserves consideration. Almost every Catholic service has a prayer for Christian unity. Her Litany of the Saints has as one of its petitions an earnest supplication for Christian unity. There is hardly a Catholic priest throughout the world who would not gladly sacrifice his life for Christian unity. The Catholic Church as a whole has nothing more at heart than Christian unity. In this she is only carrying out the prayer

and command of her divine Founder. Why then does she not join the various movements set on foot for Christian unity? For the simple reason that Christian unity must be according to Christ's plan of unity; and, since she is convinced that His plan of unity postulates the acceptance of all that He taught and as He taught it, she can take no step that implies compromise on His teaching or concession to any doctrine opposed to it.

Of course in taking this stand she believes that she has whole and entire the doctrine of Jesus Christ. She is convinced that she is the church founded by Christ and given His guarantee of perpetuity and inerrancy. Whatever others may think of this her claim, she is so convinced of it that she is prepared, like the early Christian church, to uphold it by the supreme sacrifice of life. Unless she were convinced that she possessed the whole truth of Christ, and nothing but the truth, she would have no reason for existence, for she claims to be the sole church of Christ.

In order to understand the position of the Catholic Church with regard to Christian unity, it is well to call to mind the nature and purpose of religion. Religion is a bond between the creature and the Creator. It is a means of bringing God and man into proper relationship. Hence an essential feature of religion is that it must be divine. Unless the bond be of God's making it may indeed establish relations between man and man but not between man and God. God is absolute and independent. Man is limited and dependent. Any association therefore that may be established between God and man must originate with God.

Man may make a compact with man. But any accord between man and God must depend primarily on God, to whom it belongs to state the nature and conditions of whatever relationship may be established. All this is so evident that it were needless to allude to it except as the basis of what is to follow. Religion may be natural or supernatural, according as it is founded on reason only, or revelation from

above. Natural religion is the recognition and worship of a Supreme Being which unaided nature dictates. Supernatural religion is the recognition and worship of a Supreme Being as manifested by special communication of that Being to mankind. Christianity is a supernatural religion. It is that or nothing. It is based on the revelation of Christ to mankind. Christ claimed to be divine. He claimed to be divine in the true sense. Unless He meant He was divine in the true sense He would not have been accused of blasphemy by the Jews, who of all persons were best qualified to understand Him. Moreover He claimed the attributes of the Supreme Being, declaring that He was to judge all mankind, that all power was His in heaven and earth, that He was the Author of life, the Light of the World, the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

To make such claims He must have been divine or else an impostor or fool. If He were a fool or impostor, Christianity is a deception, and the sooner it is abolished

the better. But if Christ was truly divine, Christianity is divine, a revelation from God to man, a communication of the Creator to mankind. Unless Christianity is divine it may indeed be a beautiful cult, but it is only the creation of man, something without divine sanction. Unless religion have divine sanction it cannot authoritatively speak to man. Hence all religions seek divine sanction; that is, they endeavor to impress man with the idea that they proclaim God's will in his regard.

In brief, religion professes to manifest God's will to mankind, and to demand its fulfilment under penalty of incurring the chastisement of God. Christ the Founder of Christianity revealed certain truths and commanded certain observances. He wrote no book, nor did He carve His teaching on stone, or trace it across the sky in letters of light. He might have done any of these things. But instead He founded a church, and left His teaching with her, guaranteeing that He would be with her to the end

of the world and that she should never teach error.

If He was divine, that church now exists in the world, and is moreover the teacher of divine truth. If He was not divine, away with Him and His religion altogether! Christianity therefore postulates the divinity of Christ, and the establishment by Him of a living church. In establishing His church Christ made her the vehicle of continuing His mission among mankind. He said of her, "He who hears you hears Me." He commanded us to regard the voice of His church as His own in matters of faith. He appointed the church to represent Him. It is His affair to see to it that she represents Him. Since He guaranteed that His church should be in the world forever and that she should represent Him, there is now in the world a church which is Christ's and which speaks with His authority.

Which is His church? Whichever it is it must speak authoritatively and unerringly.

Whichever it is, it must teach precisely what He taught. Christ said of His church that she should be a witness to Him before the world. We know why a witness is put on the stand. He is there to attest the truth. A good witness is one whose testimony does not change. If a witness says now one thing, now another, he is discredited. The church of Christ as a witness for Him must consequently never change her testimony regarding Him. If the deposit of faith given to the church by Christ was true, it must ever remain true. Error changes in its effort to rectify itself. Truth never changes. Truth needs no rectification. Since Christ was divine, His teaching was true. Since Christ was divine, His guarantee to His church was effective.

Hence from the beginning His church has had His true doctrine. She cannot, even if she wished, alter or modify the deposit of truth confided to her without forfeiting her claim to being His church. Therefore in matters of faith Christ's church is not free to make any change or concession. Outside

matters of faith she may go as far as Christian charity dictates, but with regard to the doctrine imparted to her by Christ she can no more change than can a man change his stature. Two things therefore seem to be evident with regard to the true church of Christ: her teaching must ever be the same, and she must always be true. There is no progress in truth. Two and two have always made four, and always will. The teaching of Christ because He was divine is as true as mathematics. Hence there is no evolution with regard to His revelation. Either it was true from the beginning or it was not. If it was true there can be no change in it; if it was not true He was not divine, and the bottom drops out of Christianity altogether.

Man with his limitations may need to rectify his statements, but it is not so with God. The church of Christ, therefore, whichever it is, has had from the beginning, and now has, the truth committed to her by her divine Founder. Which is that church? In order to be brief, let me say that

it is the church which from the beginning has never varied as a witness to Him. It is the church which speaks with His authority and inerrancy. There is but one church in the world which even claims to be infallible.

With the exception of one church, every church of Christendom admits its fallibility. A fallible church cannot be the church of the infallible Christ. A fallible church cannot be the living representative of the infallible Founder of Christianity. A divine church cannot mislead. A fallible church may mislead. With the exception of one church, every church of Christendom admits it may mislead. But Christ said He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and He is the Light of the World. A fallible church is not the Way, nor the Truth, nor the Light. The only church in the world that even claims to be infallible is the Catholic Church. The only church in the world that has unity of doctrine is the Catholic Church. The only church in the world that

as a corporate organization goes back to Christ is the Catholic Church.

The only church whose creed is not man-made is the Catholic Church. Other churches may modify their teachings or make concession of doctrine because their creed is of their own human devising. The Catholic Church did not make her creed but received it from her Founder. The Catholic Church did not accept her creed because she chose it, or liked it, but because her divine Founder delivered it to her. Every other church formulated its creed on its own judgment, and to suit itself. The Catholic Church took its creed from Christ, on faith, not because she understood its mysteries, or found its teaching congenial, but simply because He who gave it was divine, and could neither deceive nor be deceived.

Christ never debated or explained His doctrine. He did not propose it for discussion, but imposed it for acceptance as from God. The very meaning of faith is

acceptance of the word of another. Faith is not demonstration but trust, and Christian faith is trust in Christ, in what He taught and in the church which He founded and guaranteed to perpetuate and safeguard from error. There may be question in the minds of some as to which is the church of Christ, but there can be no question in a logical Christian mind as to the inerrancy and perpetuity of the church of Christ, since Christ guaranteed both.

The Catholic Church, convinced that she is the true church of Christ, cannot change the deposit of faith intrusted to her by her divine Founder. Although she is more anxious for Christian unity than the rest of Christendom, she cannot surrender or modify one article of faith, even for the sake of complete Christian unity. Christ desired unity and prayed for it. But He allowed many of His followers and some of His disciples to leave Him rather than modify His doctrine of the eucharist, as we may read in the sixth chapter of St. John. Christ wanted faith in Him because

He was divine, and His church wants it from her children for the same reason. Christ cannot be partly true and partly false. Neither can His church. If from the beginning the Catholic Church has taught one false doctrine, or changed her doctrine, she is not the church of Christ. If she is not, no other is, for she alone as a corporate religious body goes back directly to Him as Founder; and if she failed, Christ's guarantee has failed, and that ends Christianity as a divine religion.

The Catholic position is therefore logical from the standpoint of a divine religion in the world. The Catholic Church is willing to make every possible concession for Christian unity except what would destroy her as the church of Christ. She is willing to make every sacrifice consistent with her loyalty to her Founder. It may occur to some to say that she has at times added to the original deposit of faith, and that it is with regard to these, her own additions, that she should be willing to modify or compromise. To this let it be said that the

Catholic Church has not added a single article of faith to the deposit that was hers in the days of the apostles. Whenever the church by a council or by the pope has proclaimed an article of faith, she has not promulgated new doctrine but only declared solemnly what was of faith from the beginning.

It is only when a question arises regarding the deposit of faith that the church makes a solemn pronouncement on it. This does not add to the deposit of faith any more than does a decision of the Supreme Court of the United States add to the Constitution. A Supreme Court decision simply clarifies the article of the Constitution which was in question. By Christ's guarantee, the church has divine assurance that her solemn decisions in matters of faith cannot be wrong. But, let it be repeated, these decisions do not add to but only clarify the faith.

An example may make this clear. Suppose that in the Metropolitan Museum of Art there is a painting of one of the great

masters. It occupies a place with other similar works of art. Suppose a controversy arises regarding this masterpiece, and the public becomes greatly interested. If the curator takes it from its usual place and displays it more prominently, and in better light, he does not add to the treasures of the museum but only brings into prominence what was always part of the collection. So a definition of faith does not add to but merely clarifies what was already the faith of the church, as when in the second General Council (Constantinople, 381) she defined the divinity of Christ.

Believing as she does that she has the whole truth of Christ, and nothing but the truth, the Catholic Church is not narrow nor bigoted nor at all inconsiderate or unfriendly in declining to make doctrinal concessions with a view to Christian unity. She will go to the utmost limit of concession on everything that does not touch the faith she has had divinely intrusted to her from the beginning. But before she

can do anything to help the cause of unity the various Christian sects must first attain unity among themselves. This is something feasible since their creeds or confessions are of their own making. The difference between the Catholic creed and every other is that the Catholic creed was not made by the church, but received by her from Christ, whereas the other creeds were made by their various originators according to their own judgment.

In other words, the various non-Catholic creeds were what their authors chose to make them, but the Catholic creed is what Christ made it without any choice whatsoever on the part of the church. The Catholic Church received her doctrine, not as a result of deliberation or selection, but on Faith in Christ. Convinced that the Founder was divine, she received His doctrine without questioning. Members of other religions may say, *my* creed is this or that. But it is not a question of *my* creed where supernatural religion is con-

cerned but of *Christ's* creed. Christ did not establish a religion in order that man might amend it and make it his own. If therefore Protestants are sincere for Christian unity they must first establish unity among themselves, which depends altogether on themselves, since their creeds are of their own making and consequently subject to themselves. If private judgment means anything it means that.

God is not concerned with *my* religion or *thy* religion but with His religion. Individual citizens of the United States may not formulate their own Constitution but must abide by it as it stands. Christ gave its constitution to the Catholic Church, and she is not free to modify it. It is different with Protestant sects, for they made their own constitutions, and if they see fit, may remake them, as they are constantly doing. Some may say that the Catholic attitude would be reasonable if it were borne out by facts. To this let it be said that Christ's church has several in-

delible marks of identification imprinted on it by Himself: unity, authority, universality.

The only church in the world that has these attributes is the Catholic Church. She alone teaches always and everywhere the same truths; she alone is obeyed as the voice of God; she alone is not a local, national, or racial church, but embraces every nation, condition, and race of man, and exists as a living unified body with an authoritative head. If these marks do not constitute her the church of Christ, it is because there is no church of Christ, and Christianity is but a myth.

CANADA ANSWERS IN THE AFFIRMATIVE

REV. T. ALBERT MOORE, D.D., TORONTO, SECRETARY, THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

THE question, "Can the churches unite?" presupposes the desirability and the practicability of organic church union. We believe churches can unite when they agree to do so. Apparently insurmountable obstacles can be overcome when the churches negotiate with an actual desire to overcome them.

Church union is really the problem of awakening in ministers and people a conviction of its desirability, a belief in its practicability, and a purpose to its consummation. This confident opinion is expressed, although with the consciousness that some churches are apparently poles

asunder in their faith, order, and practice, while others are so widely separated by traditional prejudice and ecclesiastical custom that they apparently live in different hemispheres. The prayer of our Lord, "that they all may be one," has become a challenge to church unity with an impelling influence that constitutes an obligatory demand upon all Christians. There were many Canadians in 1902 who honestly questioned the possibility of uniting Congregational, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches in one communion. At the first joint meeting of their union committees, however, they were unanimous in these historic declarations: "the members are of one mind that organic union is both desirable and practicable"; and, "no insuperable obstacles have been discovered which should prevent such a consummation." Negotiations continued for decades until on June 10, 1925, the union of these three bodies was consummated by the establishment of the United Church of Canada.

The story of church union in Canada

antedates the beginning of these negotiations by many years. From 1867, when the various Canadian provinces were federated into the political entity known as the Dominion of Canada, there has been a persistent demand for the elimination of denominational divisions. In the early seventies the different Presbyterian communions became one body. While a few scattered congregations declined to unite, for the most part they subsequently either came in one by one and lived, or stayed out and died. From time to time the several Methodist communions united, until in 1884 they all united into one Methodist Church for all Canada. In spite of many local disagreements, and extensive deep-rooted connectional antipathies, every Methodist congregation entered the unified church.

It was to the gain of Christian religion in Canada at that time that the various denominations visioned an inevitable larger union. Occasional approaches were made between churches. These early attempts,

however, quickly revealed that differences were based, not only upon theological dogmas and ecclesiastical convictions, but also upon temperamental and basic prejudices, including profoundly different conceptions of life and ethical standards. Definite efforts toward organic union were not pressed in the hope that through association with each other, and through growing knowledge of each other, all obstacles might be overcome and agreement reached upon a basis of doctrine, order, and polity, which would be mutually acceptable.

All these differences were apparent at the beginning of the negotiations recently brought to a happy conclusion. Divergence of views was manifest not only in regard to doctrines, polity, and certain phases of social life. These differences combined to produce some very distinctive attitudes toward individual conduct and community organization. As the negotiations drew toward a climax the underlying conflict of ideals evolved with some definiteness. On several occasions it was apparent that re-

luctance to enter the union was inspired by hesitancy to support decisive legislation concerning certain social ills. In fact the opposition to enabling church union legislation was most pronounced where opposition to social reform legislation was most active. These experiences are referred to, not to awaken controversy, but because our experience suggests that any study of the problems involved in church union will be inadequate if it ignores these cleavages which apparently are only indirectly concerned with purely ecclesiastical polity.

In any negotiations for church union grave obstacles may always arise from traditional attitudes to social, economic, or political situations, because the members of the churches are members of organized groups which advocate diverse political and social action. The overcoming of these obstacles depends upon the creation of a Christian consciousness which will be stronger than these political ideals or social traditions. Can we think primarily as Christians and only secondarily as mem-

bers of any social or political organization? Can a truly catholic consciousness of being members of a Christian society overcome the domination of the lesser group loyalty? The ancient faith, which at once both affirmed one universal body of Christ and minimized the significance of different racial or national origins, might well be emphasized in the faith and practice of the modern church. In these days we are so intensely aware of a national basis of life and so deeply occupied with the concerns of the political state that it is most difficult to allow spontaneous flowering of the distinctively catholic spirit. There must be a careful tending of this seedling if we are to see in our day the full glory of what Francis Thompson described as the "Lily of the King." Although we may not see it in the flower we may tend its growth.

O Lily of the King, remember then the thing
That this dead mouth sang; and thy daughters,

As they dance before His way, sing there on the Day
What I sang when Night was on the waters!

Having sought to reveal some of the half-hidden sources of opposition to church union, we might now make reference to other differences which are more definitely ecclesiastical in origin. Predominant among these stands the reflection of modern differences in political theory, made manifest in various degrees of approximation, and loosely spoken of as democracy in organization. Closely associated with this is the excessive influence of locality in one's outlook upon life. Tenacious adherence to local interests, with distrust of the larger unit, often voices itself as a distrust of some far-off city in which the headquarters of the whole happens to be situated. The difficulty is mainly one of imagination. Democracy, too often identified with extreme decentralization, frequently forgets that republican France, which has

carried democracy to an extreme point, is perhaps the most centralized of modern states.

Another serious difficulty, too often unsuspected, arises from excessive consciousness of the present, to the exclusion of consciousness of a historical life within the church. There are those who conceive the Christian church to be a society instituted by our Lord Himself with a definite task imposed upon it by Him, and consequently regard that church as a living society directed in its decisions by the spirit of Christ who lives in it. Others regard the church more as a loose federation of local groups or congregations each of which decides freely what shall be its platform and its policy. Historical inquiry reveals that this wide difference is very modern. The Pilgrim Fathers certainly refused to consider themselves as separatists. Refraining from any action which would give them a ministry originated within themselves, they insisted on waiting until a presbytery in Europe should provide them with a min-

ister. Again, a few of the earliest Methodists in America became impatient of delay and proposed to ordain each other as ministers, reconsidered their proposal, and awaited definite establishment of continuity through presbyters from the churches beyond the seas. This sense of historic unity with the past, which is very strong in some communions and almost negligible in others, will probably be given its true place and value by the serious study of the history and development of the Christian church.

When these and a few other underlying and subconscious obstacles are fully and fairly considered, the task of the ecclesiastical engineer will be greatly simplified. After all, underneath diversity of organization there is much similarity of function prevailing in all churches. Historical development will always tend to produce in various churches some similarity in the response to certain conscious spiritual needs. This became conspicuously true in the experience of those charged with creating a

basis of union between the Congregationalists, the Methodists, and the Presbyterians in Canada. Under divers names officials were charged with similar duties and responsibilities. All alike had cherished, sometimes in spite of themselves, a presbyterial succession in the ministry; all had courts within the local church charged with oversight of the spiritual activities on the one hand and the temporalities on the other; all had developed certain coöperative enterprises in evangelism, missions, social service, education, religious education, and publications.

Three deeply seated differences were encountered. One concerned the body of elders in the Presbyterian Church; but these were found to be so similar in function to the class leaders of Methodism and to the diaconate of Congregationalism that the difficulty vanished, and strong spiritual leadership was secured in each congregation by accepting the organization of the session in every congregation. The second concerned the relation of the local congre-

gation to the whole church in the matter of calling and settling the ministers. The call system of the Presbyterian and Congregational churches seemed basically different from the appointment system of the Methodist Church. The Basis of Union declares, however, that while there is a settlement committee, the local congregation has the fullest right to call the minister of their choice. In the exercise of that right they will naturally keep in mind their own needs and program and the interests of the church as a whole. The working out of the polity thus introduced has been harmonious and satisfactory to minister, people, and the whole church, in several hundred ministerial changes. A third issue was presented by the demand of the Congregationalist section that the living church shall be the final authority in determining whether the teaching of any particular minister is in substantial agreement "with the faith of the Church." The church, to assure virility of spiritual power throughout its congregations, must act with a deep

sense of the continuity of the great fundamental truths of the Christian religion. The Basis of Union, in setting forth a brief summary of the faith as commonly held by the uniting churches, said, "We build upon the foundation laid by the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; we affirm our belief in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the primary source and ultimate standard of Christian faith and life; we acknowledge the teaching of the great creeds of the ancient Church; we maintain our allegiance to the evangelical doctrines of the Reformation." At ordination each minister is required to declare his faith, give assurance as to his call, and assert his purpose to faithfully instruct his people upon these truths.

And what has been the outcome of the effort to unite? The first year closes with expectations more than realized. The extent of the dissent from union was known ere the consummation took place. The refusal to accompany the mother church into

union was mainly within the Presbyterian Church, with very slight dissent within the Congregational Church, and practically none in the Methodist Church. This does not mean that all Congregationalists and Methodists were in favor of the union, but that their members and adherents loyally accepted the authoritative decisions of their chief courts. The final acceptance too was accorded at a time when it became clear that the cost would be tremendous. The united church must take over and carry on the total evangelistic, missionary, educational, and social welfare activities of the three uniting churches. There must be no retrenchment because of the withdrawal of financial support hitherto given by certain wealthy dissentient Presbyterians. The united church asked from its members the sum of four million dollars to maintain and carry on her general denominational work. This amount must be paid by people who had never previously contributed more than $2,365,000 in any one year. Without a murmur of complaint

the amount was subscribed within a few weeks. More than three million dollars contributed voluntarily by the people actually reached the church treasury, while dividends from invested funds increased the amount to considerably more than four million dollars.

The amalgamation of the staffs and departmental organizations of the three churches is being carried out under the direction of a representative commission. While the most delicate personal decisions have had to be made, at no time has there been any hint of cleavage on denominational lines. The working out of the Basis of Union in more detail has brought into notice wide differences in tradition and usage, but the fusion steadily proceeds without any division even of opinion which reflects denominational divisions.

Above all there has been a mighty release of spiritual energy in the unfolding of the ancient doctrines of the church and the developing of her mission. The great spiritual, social, and financial achievements

of the first year of church union have confirmed the wisdom of the three churches in Canada in becoming one. The reception of 28,432 persons into church membership, on profession of faith; the organization of several hundred new congregations especially in sparsely settled sections of our Western prairies, thus providing appointments for all the ministers who were relieved of their charges through local unions or other causes; and many other encouraging achievements of spiritual significance are definite indications of the success of church union in Canada, and satisfactory affirmative answers to the question, "Can the churches unite?"

BELIEVERS IN CHRIST MUST BE ONE IN FELLOWSHIP AND SERVICE

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THE Right Rev. V. S. Azariah, D.D., the only Indian bishop of the Church of England in India, has said: "I am an Anglican because of geographical conditions rather than because of theological belief. Because my family lived in a district where the Church of England carried on its work, they joined that church when they became Christians, and so I was brought up in that church. Had my family lived in another district, I might just as well have been an American Congregation-

alist or a Scotch Presbyterian." When the pioneer missionaries went to India they divided the territory up into mission areas and thus prevented overlapping, but by doing so they also virtually determined the denominational allegiance of those in that district that became Christians.

But now that Christianity is spreading throughout the Oriental countries, Christians from various districts are being thrown together, and they want to know why they should belong to the national churches of other lands instead of to a national church of their own land. They do not want to be Scotch Presbyterians, or Dutch Reformed, or American Congregationalists, or German Lutherans. They want to be Indian Christians. And there can be no doubt that they have as much right to refuse to be called by foreign names as the Christians in Antioch and Ephesus and Corinth had a right to refuse to become Jewish Christians.

Jesus Christ Himself was an Asiatic, and therefore the people of His own con-

tinent believe they have a right to claim Him directly for themselves rather than to receive Him through European channels or dressed in European garb. And in multitudes of ways they can understand Him better than those of Europe and America can, for He spoke as they are accustomed to speak—in parables and stories, drawing largely on nature for His materials. And His country was in many ways very much like their countries and very different from Europe and America.

There are many reasons why the Orientals do not want to continue the denominational differences of the West. In the first place they feel the task of winning their countries for Christ is too stupendous a task to be undertaken by a divided army. And then they believe the forms of the West are not suited to the East, and furthermore they believe that they have rich heritages of spiritual truth that should be utilized in expressing the full-orbed splendor of Christianity in their lands. They believe that Christ "came to fulfil" the best

in their lands as well as in Judaism and therefore want to clothe their Christ in the flowing robes of their own devotion and mysticism.

H. Davies says in the *Chinese Recorder* of September, 1920:

> The divergences of opinion and unseemly wranglings that have left their mark in the divisions that exist among the Churches of the West have no significance in the eyes of the Chinese, and it seems both unreasonable and wrong that the unhappy and weakening divisions of the West should be perpetuated in China.
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> The Maoris of New Zealand are said to be engaged in a determined movement to secure an independent Church. A remarkable Maori leader, named Ratana, has launched a Maori Church in which there are already 20,000 members coming from the Anglican, Roman Catholic, Methodist and Mormon Churches in that country.

In 1919 the students of Manila prepared a petition, had it signed by many

17,292

of the leading Filipinos of Manila, and sent a prominent young Filipino to America, asking the denominational Boards to establish a Union Student Church in their city. The Filipinos are bent on the elimination of these foreign, and to them meaningless, divisions.[1]

A Conference of Christian College Graduates held in Bangalore, South India, in 1921, put themselves on record as follows: "This Conference of Indian Christians, consisting of members of the Anglican, Wesleyan, Lutheran, Baptist, Presbyterian and South Indian United Church denominations, is of the opinion that the several denominations of the Christian Church are in all essential respects within the one Church Catholic, and that in the interest of true Christian fellowship and for the extension of the Kingdom of Christ in this land, a recognition of the equal status of the denominations within the one Church of Christ, and of their

[1] F. C. Laubach in the *International Review of Missions,* October, 1922.

ministries as of equal validity, is necessary."

Another group of Christians in Madras has said: "Apart from a foreign denominationalism that Western Christianity has introduced into India, it has also brought with it an administrative, ecclesiastical and evangelistic machinery that is beyond the natural capacity and unsuited to the instinctive genius of the Indian. Indian religion has laid far less emphasis on close organization and on costly institutions and has depended far more on the personal and voluntary service of unorganized religious workers of the type of *Sadhus*." Hence they argue that there should be an Indian form of Christianity which should be very simple and suited to the religious genius of the Indian.

In Japan conditions are somewhat different, for there the denominational churches became national before the present movement looking toward church union had begun, and now the Japanese are so loyal to their various national denomina-

tional churches that it will be very difficult for them to unite into one national church. Here, as in Corinth, it seems that at the beginning of the Christian movement one said, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," and a third, "I am of Cephas," and they have not yet heeded the apostle's warning regarding such divisions.

In many of the Oriental countries, there has already been a movement toward union, and in China several related bodies have already united. The Episcopal churches have formed one national body, and twelve groups of Presbyterians have also become one. In three provinces, groups of Presbyterians and Congregationalists have united, and five groups of Lutherans have become one church.

Likewise in India. There are now no Presbyterian or Congregational churches in that land, as they have united to form two groups, the South India United Church and the United Church of India, North. Except for geographical reasons these two would be one body.

But perhaps the most interesting and at the same time the most hopeful movement for union is taking place in South India, where Anglican and Wesleyan bodies are negotiating regarding union with the South India United Church, which is itself a union of Presbyterian and Congregational groups formerly connected with nine different missions. These negotiations began in 1920, just before the Lambeth Conference of that year, and were initiated by a group of Indian ministers belonging to the South India United and Anglican churches, who had met together to discuss methods for evangelistic work. While discussing ways and means of winning their country for Christ, the Holy Spirit laid this matter of church union so strongly on their hearts that they spent two more days in prayer and conference on the subject and sent out an appeal to their two churches to take this matter up.

Since then six meetings have been held by the official committees appointed by the two churches, and in the last two meetings

they have been joined by official delegates from the Wesleyan Church of South India. After each meeting the results of their deliberations were reported to their churches and considered by their highest courts. Certain matters were accepted by the churches and others referred back to the joint committees. There has been the frankest discussion and the finest fellowship in these meetings, and the meetings in themselves have done much to bring these bodies closer together.

At the very first meeting of the joint committee a general principle was laid down that has been the guiding star ever since. It reads as follows: "We are agreed that the only union which Christians should aim at is the union of all who acknowledge the name of Christ in the Universal Church which is His Body; and that the test of all local schemes of union is that they should express locally the principles of the great Catholic unity of the Body of Christ. Our only desire, therefore, is so to organize the Church in India that it shall give the In-

dian expression of the spirit, the thought, and the life of the Church Universal."

This principle safeguards several important matters. It maintains that the union that may result from the negotiations now going on will be only a part of the church which is universal. It also maintains that this church shall be Indian and that it shall express all Christian truth so that it shall be true to the spirit and thought of India. And that means not only that the form of the church shall not be a form imposed from without but that both in form and in content it shall be truly Indian while at the same time truly universal.

It was also agreed at that first meeting that "the historic episcopate in a constitutional form is that which is more likely than any other to promote and preserve the unity of the church." Though the members of the South India United Church accept this for the sake of unity, it by no means can be understood to mean that they accept all that some people think is implied in the idea of the episcopate. In fact they

distinctly state that no doctrinal implications are accepted with this form of government, but they do admit that in India, as well, perhaps, as elsewhere, for the present at least, the episcopal form of government is more likely to unite all Christians than any other form. Besides, India has always been patriarchal in government, both in the family and in the state.

Two questions have presented real difficulty. These relate to the ministry and to intercommunion. While the South India United Church is willing to recognize the ministry and the sacraments of the Church of England as fully valid and regular, there are some in the Church of England that feel that only the ministry that has been ordained by the laying on of episcopal hands, and the sacraments administered by those so ordained, are valid. In the various meetings that have been held several attempts have been made to come to agreement, and several proposals have been submitted to the churches for their acceptance. But there have always been some

who could not accept these proposals. In the most recent meeting of the joint committee of these three churches, a new proposal has been accepted, and it is hoped that all the churches will agree to adopt it. This provides that all the present ministers in the three churches shall be recognized as ministers in the church after union. They will have equal status in all the church courts. But it is also agreed that no man shall exercise his ministry, either temporarily or permanently, in any church that does not especially invite him to minister to it. This will safeguard the conscience of any member and prevent, on the one side, a minister not ordained by a bishop from administering the sacraments to those accustomed to an episcopal ministry, and, on the other hand, will prevent a High-church eucharist from being celebrated in a church that has been accustomed to a Free-church communion service.

At the same time considerable freedom has been given to the members of the

church after union to partake of the Lord's supper in the various churches of this united church not only, but in the churches of other denominations as well. All those accustomed to fellowship with others at the Lord's table will be as free as before to do so; and of course no member of the church after union will be forbidden to take communion from any minister in that church whether he has been ordained episcopally or not. Thus there will be greater freedom for all members of that church than at present, and this will add much to the fellowship that Indian Christians have with one another.

In the building up of this new church in South India, it is hoped that the way may be found by which others also, in other parts of the world, may come together in organic union. This church after union hopes to maintain its present friendly relations with such international bodies as the Lambeth Conference of Anglican Churches, the Alliance of Churches Holding the Presbyterian System, the

Wesleyan Synod of England, and the International Council of Congregational Churches; for the Church of South India does not wish to become a new denomination, simply adding another to the large number already in existence, but wishes to be an influence that will bring other churches together. Hence it wishes to retain full fellowship with all the churches with which these several churches are now in fellowship.

And, in addition to that, this church also hopes to be able to understand the mind and heart of India, for it is to be an Indian church, controlled by Indians, and only such a church can give "the Indian expression" to the truth as it is in Christ. But in doing so she will also help the world to understand some of the teachings of Christ better perhaps than Europe has yet understood them. For in India fasting, meditation, prayer, and adoration are perhaps practised more than they are in Europe or America. Christ would perhaps feel more at home on the open roads of

India than He would on the motor-crowded streets of an American town, and he would move more freely, perhaps, in the throng at one of India's great religious festivals than He would in the ritualistic services of some of our churches or in the crude and colorless meetings in some of our chapels. India can teach us much of poverty of spirit, sacrifice in devotion, loyalty to a personal God, and union with God. China will perhaps teach us something new regarding fatherhood when she becomes one in Christ, and each other land will add its gifts to the treasures laid at His feet. But to bring out the fullness of the riches of all lands those who believe in Christ must be one in their fellowship and service.

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, that ye love one another."

DENOMINATIONAL DIVISION BASICALLY MISREPRESENTS THE VERY NATURE OF CHRISTIANITY

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NOT long ago a very dear friend came into my office to consult with me about a matter over which he was greatly disturbed. "What can we do," he asked, "to hold my boys to the church?"

I knew the situation. He had three fine sons, two of them high-school graduates and one of them college trained. They lived in a small hamlet in which there were two decadent little churches—churches that were conspicuous mainly because of the

pitiful contrast which they made to everything else in the community. They were the deadest, most poverty-stricken institutions in all of that township. There was not a thing about them that would appeal to educated virile youth.

"Mother and I stand them the best we can," he said, with a tone of utter sadness in his voice, "but there is nothing there for our boys. They simply won't go! And we can never hope for anything better as long as we try to run two churches!"

This is a typical experience, one which is taking place all over this land. Earnest Christian fathers and mothers in growing numbers in such communities are becoming desperate because such churches as they have are no longer able to interest and hold their children. When they analyze the situation, they know that their children are not to blame. They know what the trouble is, and freely admit it among themselves. They have so many churches that they cannot maintain in any of them the type of pastor and the kind of equipment and

program which are required for successful Christian work in this day. And everywhere such folks are asking with increasing insistence why it is that they cannot get together and form one church that is really worth while.

This has become one of the most common and urgent questions in the minds of Christian people to-day. For the divided state of the church not only affects adversely practically every town and country community in existence, but it also wastes the resources and cuts down the efficiency of Christian effort in the cities and in the foreign field and in virtually every line of Christian endeavor. There is not a problem with which the church has to grapple anywhere, concerning anything, which is not made more difficult or actually impossible because its forces are divided into competitive, self-ambitious denominational groups which are each jockeying for an advantage and fearful that they will be outdone in the race. But deeper yet and far more important is the fact that such

denominational division basically misrepresents the very nature of Christianity and the very function of the church. Hence there is no question more crucial to the church and Christian progress than this: "Can the churches unite?"

There is but one answer. They can if they quit "kidding" themselves and each other and deal frankly and honestly with facts. The one great trouble has been that we have all been deceiving ourselves about the differences which exist between the various denominations. We have fancied them to be far greater and more insurmountable than they really are. There is nothing to be gained by minimizing the difficulties which stand in the way; but it is unpardonable to exaggerate those difficulties and confuse and betray ourselves by misrepresentation.

First of all we need to recognize the fact that the obstacles in the way of union are not individuals, but ecclesiastical organizations and machinery. Individuals, as individuals, are already practising union. In

a multitude of instances they have proved both the possibility and the practicability of union. Men and women of many denominations and of many creeds and rituals have united to form one church, and have not been in the least discommoded in their Christian life or service thereby. In fact, their experience has been the very reverse. They have discovered that religious faith is broadened and enriched by the practice of such larger and finer fellowship.

One can find such churches in every city suburb, on every frontier, and in nearly every country community. These churches each go under some certain denominational name and preserve a denominational identity. But in reality they are made up of segments of many denominations. It is no unusual thing to find a dozen or more different denominations represented in the membership of such churches—yet all working together in such unity and compactness as to form one church, in which one cannot detect seams or friction spring-

ing from the integration of these various denominational factors. This proves beyond a doubt that the union of the churches is possible so far as individuals are concerned. It is only the collective actions and fears and prejudices, and the ecclesiastical influences and machinery, which make the uniting of the different denominations difficult.

Such union as is now being practised by individuals of various denominations is an imperative necessity to the preservation of the church and Christianity in innumerable communities. In no other way could the people of such communities have a church at all. In the small suburb of the city in which the writer lives, for instance, there are seventeen different denominations represented in the population. Not more than eleven families belong to any one of the seventeen; and to each of the others, only two or three families. One church serves them all; and uniting with it, these folks have had a most delightful and helpful fellowship—with never once the least

disturbance over creed or ceremony or over difference of opinion which came out of their former denominational training. In another suburb of this same city is another church not one fifth of the membership of which came originally from homes of its own denomination. These are no unusual instances. There are literally hundreds of such churches, scattered everywhere. Such denominational integration is possible wherever the local church is broad enough and inclusive enough in its Christian fellowship.

There is no use saying that the churches cannot unite; for they are already in a very suggestive and revealing reality united in many places.

Even in a collective and organized way the people of the various denominations are actually practising union. They unite in some of the most vital activities and processes in which the church of Jesus Christ ever engages. In many cities and communities the churches do go together for great tabernacle meetings, for evan-

gelistic campaigns, for the promotion of missions, for prohibition, and for other things. Even very many of the denominational and ecclesiastical organizations are actually uniting on certain missionary and other projects, and, through local and national federations of churches, are experimenting in union. It is a very meager and timid sort of union, as yet; but even at that it is sufficient to prove the utter fallacy and even falsehood of the things which have been keeping the churches apart.

And now if the churches in any local community realize such a marvelously augmented power and enthusiasm in working together during an evangelistic meeting, if in such increased numbers they find both strength and joyful inspiration, what is the sense of each little group drawing back into its own shell as soon as the meeting is closed? If these churches find it beneficial, and even necessary for the best results, to unite to win men and women to Jesus Christ, what sort of judgment does it show

for them to separate and dissipate their strength and fellowship in the very much more difficult and even more important work of conserving these converts and deploying them for the best advantages of Christian service?

It is such experiences as these, and just such questions as these, which are stirring the good common sense of thoughtful Christian people everywhere to see the utter needlessness and absurdity of the divisions which we have been trying to persuade ourselves to believe are hopelessly incurable in the church.

People are coming more and more to realize that if they can get together in the most basic and vital Christian enterprises to the delight of themselves and to the great benefit of the cause in which they are engaged, then it is nothing less than a travesty on the great broad mind and heart of Jesus Christ for His followers to divide and impoverish themselves and disintegrate His forces over the little and inconsequential things which do not matter.

Another thing of which Christian men and women must disillusion themselves is the fond belief that our various churches each minister to individuals of some distinctive type or temperament. People have been told this until they have come to believe it. They fancy that men and women are so differently constituted temperamentally as to require these various denominations to fit their widely differing needs. But the facts show the error of this very common theory.

Children grow up to be Methodists or Baptists or Episcopalians or what not for the same reason that they become Democrats or Republicans—because of what their parents are and because of the early influences brought to bear upon them. Temperament has little indeed to do with it. Convenience, friendships, social strata, or the local environment are far more instrumental in determining the average choice of church membership than does any inherent natural temperament or taste or disposition.

This fact becomes all the more obvious and unmistakable when we visit the churches and find that in by far the greater number of them there is practically no difference whatever in the services of worship as given by the various denominations. So small indeed is this difference that it would be almost impossible for any stranger to guess, by what is being said or done, just what particular church he had chanced to enter. The songs, the prayers, the sermon, the whole situation and atmosphere, are so similar in all of our churches—except the certain few which are "queer" or out of the regular Protestant run—that it would be difficult indeed to distinguish which is which by the worship service in the local church. Of course the big down-town churches are not like the smaller churches in the suburbs or in the country; but the difference is one of class, or environment, or financial resources, and does not parallel denominational lines at all.

How little difference there now is be-

tween the various churches is best illustrated by the ease and satisfaction with which members pass from one to another of the denominations as they move from community to community. Finding no church of their own denomination in the community to which they go, men and women readily join one of some other denomination. And the highly significant thing is that they do so with perfect freedom, without any question or restriction of any kind whatsoever as to their doctrinal belief—and, apart from the one matter of the mode of baptism in the immersionist churches, without a single additional requirement over those of the church to which they had formerly belonged. Innumerable individuals have thus found a congenial church home at various times in a number of different denominations, and have thus discovered that there is very little difference after all in the spirit and worship of these various groups of worshipers.

The little difference which still exists be-

tween churches is confined almost entirely to minor parts of the worship service and to the formularies for receiving members. After the members once are in, there is practically no difference at all in belief or practice as these things are actually being lived out in the various denominations today. Even if there are minor differences in the church worship service, there is no difference whatever in the great Sunday-school, and missionary, and young people's, and men's brotherhood activities. More and more these are forging into prominence in the program and life of the churches; and no man could sit in the Sunday-school or missionary society or any other auxiliary service, and tell by what went on which particular denominational church sheltered him.

In view of such obvious and indisputable facts, it is nothing less than silly for Christian people longer to fool themselves into believing, or into acting on the assumption, that each church is making some distinctive and vital contribution which is in-

herently different from that which is being made by any of the others.

But we must go deeper than that yet with our disillusionment. We must face and acknowledge the disquieting and distasteful fact that wherein our denominations do differ, they differ only in those realms of opinion and practice which do not touch or modify Christian life and purpose. If we are honest—and if we are not honest in the matter, what is the need of considering it at all?—we will simply have to admit that there is not a denomination in the land which has a monopoly upon any peculiar and distinctive element of Christ's gospel primary enough to affect Christian character. Honesty, truthfulness, purity, generosity, love, forgiveness, and all of the other Christian virtues, are absolutely undenominational—identical in all of the churches, and as typical of the one as they are of the other.

Hence it is that by their lives no man can tell the denominational classification of the real followers of Christ—whether they

be Methodists, Presbyterians, Disciples, Congregationalists, or what not. Each group may feel that its own denomination has some very important beliefs or practices which the others do not have; but just common honesty forces them to admit that these beliefs and practices which seem so important to them make no determining impression whatever on the kind of Christian life which men live. The various creeds and dogmas, the many modes and practices, over which we divide into our various churches, spring from mental concepts and do not reach down into the mainsprings of action or regulate Christian conduct and Christian character. Men and women are alike Christian in their motives and activities whether they hold to the one or to the other of these decisive tenets and practices of the churches. Because this is true, the churches will find it increasingly difficult to delude men and women into believing that it will make any difference whatever to the individual or to the community whether their own par-

ticular denomination is perpetuated in it or not.

This must be the first step toward union —to be fair enough and honest enough with ourselves and with each other to admit that denominational differences all lie within that class of beliefs which do not in the least influence the type of life and service which all churches produce through the grace of our Lord and Master.

Down underneath all of our denominational differences are those great essential elements of Christian faith and Christian experience which are common to all. And these it is which vitally affect character and motivate life, and produce in men and women the beauty and integrity which characterize real Christian character, no matter in which particular church it may be found.

Can the churches unite? There can be but one answer. Of course they can if Christian men and women will be honest enough in their thinking and genuine enough in their Christian loyalties to see

and accept the facts as they really are and be guided accordingly. Once convinced that denominational division is not necessary to fit into human nature, or to maintain Christian zeal, or to preserve some distinctive and invaluable deposits of Christian truth and practice that otherwise would be lost—men will prove themselves equal in intelligence and moral integrity to devising a workable plan by which the churches can be brought together and cemented into one solid fellowship through Christ Jesus their common Lord.

OUR MORAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR UNITY

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DR. Frederick J. Powicke has put us all in his debt by his painstaking and authoritative *Life of Richard Baxter*. He has classified the materials which have been brought together by his own patient research in such a fashion that the reader has access to the sources which make it possible for him to make up his own mind regarding the important matters as to Baxter's life and leadership. The chapter on "The Worcestershire Association" contains some observations and quotations which are particularly pertinent to our present discussion.

"Baxter's passionate desire for the church," says Dr. Powicke, "was its visible

unity." He goes on: "There are essential truths in which all genuine Christians are at one. These, therefore, constitute a common foundation upon which all Christians stand. Everything else, however important, is secondary. Unite, then, on these. Let these, and these only, be laid down as the terms of communion. Come together in virtue of these. Love one another for the sake of these As to doubtful points discuss them in a spirit of Charity. Agree to give and take. You will find the range of your agreement wider than you think; and tending constantly to expand. Meanwhile give to others the liberty you claim from them." After this summary of Baxter's position Dr. Powicke quotes from him directly: "I perceived . . . that every Party before mentioned having some Truth of Good in which it was more eminent than the rest, it was no impossible thing to separate all that from the Error and the Evil, and that among all the Truths which they held either in Common or in Controversy, there was no contradiction; and, therefore, that

he that would procure the Welfare of the Church must do his best to promote all the Truth and Good which was held by every part, and to leave out all their Errors and their Evil, and not take up all that any Party had espoused as their own."

It is with a kind of wistful sadness that one realizes that a seventeenth-century divine had thought so clearly and so wisely about the whole problem. Why is it, we ask ourselves, that such thought has not been followed by more clear and practical gains on the part of the spirit of unity among Christian men? Doubtless there are many answers to such a question. We desire particularly to consider one of them. Is it not true that by the majority of Christian people unity has been considered as a lovely dream rather than as a moral responsibility? And is it not also true that until we remove the thought of unity from the realm of romantic reverie to the realm of the categorical imperative no very substantial progress can be made? Changing what we have put in the form of questions

to the form of definite assertion, we may say that only when the matter of unity is put squarely and remorselessly upon the conscience of Christian men and women is there hope for definite achievement.

The moment we put the matter in this way, voices of honest objection begin to be heard. They have many things to say. But most of them in one way or another come at last to this: the Christian freedom of the individual is more important than the solidarity of the Christian church. It is quite clear that those who believe that the freedom of the Christian man is the great matter in religion and those who believe that the corporate life of the church is the thing of essential significance do have a way of taking up their position on the opposite sides of what seems to be a very deep chasm.

The problem, to be sure, is very much older than the question of unity in the Christian church. In ancient Athens Protagoras declared that the individual man is the measure of all things. Over against

him Socrates declared that the eccentricity of the individual must be checked by the class. It was humanity and not the individual man which then offered the satisfactory standard. The fight between nominalism and realism in the Middle Ages centered about the same opposing principles, and nominalism was the intellectual forerunner of the Protestant Revolt. Even in politics the two positions have come to clenched antagonism. The federalism of Alexander Hamilton in the United States of America and the individualism of Thomas Jefferson set the same principles in battle array upon the political arena. It is clear enough that positions which relate themselves to so many types of experience and aspects of life must penetrate deeply into the meaning of things. And we must be prepared to meet their antagonism in earnest and open-minded fashion. But surely it is not too much to say that those who emphasize solidarity have a stake in the integrity of the individual. And surely it is also true that the apostles of freedom

have a deeper interest than they sometimes understand in the corporate life. It is important that each group shall see the meaning of the thing for which the other contends. And it must be said quite frankly and without hesitation that no type of corporate life which does not protect the integrity of the individual can ever command the conscience of a man who understands the meaning of freedom.

This leads us directly to the question as to what sort of unity can actually become a moral imperative to all types of Christian men and women. We can at least attempt to suggest the lines along which the answer to this question must move.

(1) There is possible an increasing unity in the matter of doing the will of Christ in the world. The great Conference on Life and Work held in 1925 at Stockholm did, to be sure, lift many matters concerning which it is not possible for Christian men and women at present to see eye to eye. But it would scarcely be claimed that there are insuperable barriers

here. As men think together and work together, these things tend to become clearer and clearer. A general agreement as to the great matters of individual and corporate ethics does not seem an impossible consummation if we really submit ourselves to the spirit of Jesus and actually set about doing His will.

(2) The matter of the contents of the Christian faith as a great body of doctrine at once brings us into the region of controversies which have almost devastated the Christian church. To be sure, the historic churches, Greek, Latin, and Protestant, do have a great body of doctrine to which historically at least they have in common borne witness. The personality of God, that richness of the divine life which has been expressed by the doctrine of the Trinity, the deadliness of sin, the deity of our Lord, the great act of redemption upon the cross, the new life here and the immortal life after death—these are among those assertions which belong to the trunk of the tree of the Christian church before

the branches begin to separate. And it would seem fairly clear that any corporate life of the mind of the church must include these positions. Yet we must admit that many sincere men and women who are most eager to accept the leadership of Christ and to crown Him Master and Lord do not find it possible to give personal assent to all these positions. And they cannot be made to feel moral responsibility for a type of unity which would involve them in intellectual dishonesty.

Here we come upon one of the most difficult situations we have to meet. It seems clear that there must be a body of belief which represents the witness of the whole Christian church held in such a fashion that there is room for organized participation in the life of the church on the part of those who have personal scruples at particular points. And the security of this elasticity without interfering with the corporate witness of the whole church is a task which may well test all the mental acumen and moral sympathy and spiritual

insight of the leaders of the ecclesia. It is very clear, however, that the moment we discover the way to a method of corporate witness in matters of faith which leaves room for the necessary freedom and growth of various types of individuals, the moral responsibility for unity will be recognized by multitudes who at present find themselves cold in the presence of the whole discussion.

(3) The expression of unity by means of the whole order of worship and through ecclesiastical organization and activity brings us immediately into fiercely contested areas. On the one hand it is clear that a tremendous force would be released upon the world by the church if there were possible a genuinely corporate action in all these regards. On the other hand, it seems equally clear that there are structural differences in men's requirements in respect of worship and organization which are indicated definitely enough when we observe on the one hand the gracious and noble ritual of the Anglican communion

and on the other the characteristic worship of the Society of Friends, or when we compare the highly articulated organization of an episcopal communion with the theory and practice of the congregational groups. Is there any fashion in which we can secure a really corporate expression of the life of the church in these regards and at the same time provide for the difference and variety whose requirement is clearly illustrated by the practice of the groups to which we have just referred?

This article is being written on an Atlantic liner. The author never comes to a Sunday on the sea without feeling the peculiarly gracious sense of solidarity in worship which comes if the noble ritual of morning prayer is used. Then there comes a sense of all the other ships on the seven seas where the same great words are lifting the minds and hearts of men to God. He himself, though a member of the Methodist Episcopal communion, always feels a definite objection to any tampering with morning prayer as it appears

in the Book of Common Prayer at such a time. It is surely not too much to believe that the men and women who express their devotion in the most various ways have a real, if sometimes hardly conscious or articulate, longing for a corporate expression of the whole church in forms of worship which are recognized and shared by all Christians always and everywhere. Is it not possible here, too, that we may evolve a method whereby a great corporate witness is united with a frank acknowledgment of freedom on the part of various groups to supplement this witness in common by such individual forms of worship or such freedom from forms as shall express the quality and the genius of these particular groups? And may not even problems of organization and all the subtly difficult matters in connection with the ministry be approached in the same fashion? At least it is clear that the moment we approach these matters with such a method a vast body of moral conviction is released in favor of corporate witness

on the part of the church which is quite unavailable under any other conditions.

It is a matter of definite and happy hopefulness that the world conference to be held at Lausanne, Switzerland, next August, is taking up the problems of faith and order with an actual understanding of the matters we have discussed and with a spirit which indicates an understanding of just the sort of problems and conditions we have set forth in this discussion. All Christian men and women of good-will surely have a personal stake in the activities of the conference and will look forward with keen interest to the time when they can know the results of its deliberations.

The truth, of course, is that every communion of the Christian church bears witness to some aspect of Christian reality which all the others need. Only together do they represent the full round of Christian faith and life. Indeed it may well be that mutual appreciation is the next step toward unity. The capacity for spiritual appreciation and appropriation has the

very genius of organic unity in it. It is in this fashion that we become part of the whole body of Christ in the world. And that very experience gives us a new apprehension of our moral responsibility in respect of the unity of the whole church. Every time you produce an individual Christian whose life can only be satisfied by the witness of all the communions of the Christian church, you have taken a step of the utmost strategy in respect of the corporate life of that invisible church whose unity is in the mind and heart of Christ himself. And when there are enough of such men and women, the practical steps in making that inner unity visible and impressive will inevitably be taken.

THE FINDING OF A COMMON STANDING GROUND

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WE may approach the question as to the proper basis of Christian union in two ways. We may assume on the one hand that all church polities are equally valid, and on the other hand that some one is entitled to claim validity to the exclusion of others.

Consider briefly the first view. It asserts that the New Testament is indeterminate as to church organization; that Christianity, being a life-principle, is subject to growth and development; that variety and not uniformity is the law of growth; and that the various Christian de-

nominations as they exist to-day are simply examples of the freedom of the Spirit in the religious struggles of the race. This view must recognize as equally legitimate the democracy of congregational bodies and the autocracy of the Roman Catholic Church, as well as all the polities which lie between. Under this view a Baptist would feel bound to maintain his doctrine of the church, as would also the Presbyterian and others, on the ground that each is necessary to the expression of the variety and fullness of the life in Christ.

It would become apparent at once, however, that "organic" union would be impossible. For the polities are incompatible with each other. Any authoritative source of unity which should embrace all the denominations would at once annul such polities as deny authority in this sense. Episcopacy in any form would nullify democracy, and any real democracy would cancel the episcopal principle. Coöperation would thus remain as the only mode of

Christian union. The principle of coöperation is essentially the democratic principle. It recognizes the autonomy of each denomination, and declines to interfere with the ecclesiastical integrity of any religious body.

Now as a matter of fact Baptists achieve all their results in general organization on the principle of coöperation, that is to say, on the voluntary principle. Only they carry that principle to the local congregation and to the individual. It applies to all missionary and benevolent organizations whatever. When they coöperate for common ends they organize without any centralized authority. Those who join and those who withdraw from the organization do so at will. Not legal solidarity but voluntary unity is their principle.

It is obvious, now, that if the principle of coöperation alone is to be invoked to secure Christian union it can never achieve the result unless it is applied in a far more thoroughgoing manner than at present. For while it may mitigate the evils of a

divided Christendom at certain points, it cannot abolish them. It may stimulate the system with a moral tonic but cannot eradicate the disease.

Our conclusion therefore is that the theory that all the existing church polities are equally warranted by the New Testament or by the essential nature of Christianity is incorrect. It does not and cannot yield an answer to Christ's prayer that his people may all be one. Federation of incongruous and contradictory systems is the best it can do.

We are forced, then, to the view that somewhere there must be found a single principle broad and flexible and energetic enough to answer the ecclesiastical needs of the gospel. Where shall it be found? The reply is that it must be found in the congregational or Roman Catholic polity. The reason for the assertion is that these two alone are self-consistent. Those which lie between are dualistic; they seek to combine authority and democracy in an inconsistent way.

The reader does not need to be told, of course, where the sympathies of the writer lie as between these two contrasted polities. He is persuaded that the congregational form of church polity is the goal of development for Christendom. It is not so much as a result of argument that men will be convinced, or that any ready-made scheme of Christian union will win the universal approval. It is rather that by a sort of spiritual gravitation men will reach it, by a deeper apprehension of the New Testament they will come to it.

We may now examine briefly the twofold method which has been applied in the past for attaining unity. One of these is the method of addition, the other the method of subtraction.

First we consider the method of addition. Some standard is set up which is regarded as the combination of all the necessary elements in the ideal, and others are asked to add to what they already have and thus attain to Christian union. This is the method of the Lambeth proposals. The his-

toric episcopate is to be incorporated as an addition to all the other polities which seek union on the Lambeth platform. But this platform of union failed. It approached the matter in an unhistoric way. Change in living things comes of growth, not by mechanical accretion. Besides its method is psychologically defective. Men do not find common standing-ground by the imposition of something new, by one of the parties to the agreement, upon the other. They seek out the things on which there is some measure of agreement already.

This brings us to the second method, viz., the method of subtraction. This puts on one side the things which give offense, as far as possible, and seeks a common point of view. This is the usual mode of procedure in attempts at union of any kind. It is that which controls in the current forms of coöperation among the churches. There is no agreement in polity, but there is in certain doctrinal views and moral ends. Hence the latter alone are brought into the question.

In applying the principle of subtraction in order to find a common standing-ground for union, Baptists have stood apparently at a great disadvantage, although in reality their position is a very strong one. They have reduced the elements of church organization to the lowest possible terms, and hence, when urged to surrender this or that, they see no way of doing so without striking a blow at their ecclesiastical integrity. Their church polity is the simple undeveloped polity of the New Testament. They have the minimum of church government, congregationalism; the minimum of office-bearers, pastors or elders and deacons; the minimum of ordinances, baptism and the Lord's supper; the minimum of doctrinal tests for membership, not subscription to a creed but vital faith in Christ and the spirit of obedience to his commands as evidenced in the first instance by submission to baptism in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

It is evident from the preceding that if the method of addition were the correct

one for use in attaining Christian union, Baptists would be in a position to add all the elements of episcopacy, and sacerdotalism, the Methodistic principle, and the principle of authoritative representation, a series of graded courts and legislatures. But, as previously remarked, the enforced introduction of new planks into platforms of union is not the correct method, but rather the finding of a common standing-ground, or the method of subtraction.

Baptists have, in short, carried this process of subtraction to the limit, or rather they have eschewed the tendency to incorporate new features into the simple New Testament polity which renders subtraction necessary.

It is at this point that we find an explanation of the fact that Baptists have not been particularly active as a rule in efforts toward organic Christian union. They are not indeed without profound interest in the matter. But being unable to surrender any element of their simple church order without fatally weakening it,

and being unwilling to urge others to violate their consciences, they have awaited the leading of Providence rather than sought to reorganize Christianity.

There is, however, a still deeper reason for their attitude. The movement toward Christian union has, in their view, too often conceived Christianity primarily as an ecclesiasticism, whereas it is essentially a life involving certain relations to God through Christ.

The plea of Baptists, therefore, is not a plea for "organic" union as the chief goal of endeavor at present, however desirable and important Christian union is in itself. Their plea is rather for the spiritual rights of mankind: the competency of the soul in religion under God, the equality of all men in direct dealing with God, the equal rights of believers in the church, the principle of responsibility as growing out of the freedom of the soul. The axioms of religion lie at the heart of New Testament Christianity.

The axioms of religion enter vitally into

the primal instincts of all men who have been under the guiding hand of Christ and who have been nurtured in New Testament teaching. No effort or device for ecclesiastical or "organic" union can ever permanently succeed which ignores those instincts. We must learn to think God's thoughts after Him as revealed in Christ if we are to find the clue to unity. The deeper currents of thought and life in the Christian world, the fundamental relations of the world to God, must find embodiment in the final church order.

In conclusion I may sum up what I have been saying as follows:

(1) First of all, let us make obedience to Christ, as revealed in the New Testament, the goal of our endeavor in all efforts for Christian unity.

(2) Let us seek to realize the spirit of Christian unity rather than attempt premature ecclesiastical union.

(3) Let us not ignore conscience and loyalty to Christ in our quest for unity.

(4) Let us avoid the perils of premature

union efforts. We have had some wholesome warnings in this regard.

(5) Let us coöperate as far as we can do so conscientiously and consistently in promoting the interest of the Kingdom of God common to all believers.

(6) Let us have faith in God to believe that He will guide us to the wise course of action as the future may unfold.

THE NEED, POSSIBILITY, AND METHOD OF A UNITED CHURCH

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THERE cannot but be deep appreciation among Protestant Christians for the movement of these days in behalf of formal Christian unity. A host of Christians of every communion believe in Christian unity and work for it. The Conference on Faith and Order, which is to meet at Lausanne in 1927, will afford an opportunity for every Christian communion to be represented there and thus to show its faith in this greatly desired end, a united church.

It is not something foreign to the trend of the times but one in harmony with what

is everywhere being sought. We see this in the education of to-day, which is seeking a "more comprehensive plan"; we see it in business with its chamber of commerce, as a sort of national and international exchange; we see it in industry with its working-men's union and its international bureau of labor; and we see it in political government with its League of Nations. Years of effort in thought and prayer and committee conferences, both here and in England and elsewhere, by leading representatives of many communions, have been given to what this coming conference seeks to bring about. It will be international in its scope and most impressive in its deep spiritual desire to have answered the prayer of our Lord, "That they all may be one as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they may be one in us." And the purpose of it as stated in its agenda is in harmony with that of the Master: "That through His Church, the non-Christian world should be converted and all human society purified and inspired, a purpose

which cannot be fulfilled but by a United Church."

The need for a united church is evident. The churches of our day have caught a vision of world-needs, and because of that vision the movement for formal Christian unity has been stimulated. We are seeing that a united church is necessary to meet those needs and to be jointly responsible for them. The very needs, both at home and abroad, are causing many thinkers among us to despair of the future of civilization. But this is certain, that there are in every communion those who believe that "the gigantic problems" of our time cannot be met by the efforts of separate denominations alone, however strong and aggressive they be, but require a united phalanx of all of them working together, unitedly undertaking the one great task of bringing on earth the Kingdom of God, so happily phrased by Dr. Peabody as "a spiritual fellowship of consecrated lives." The conference at Lausanne will be a great opportunity to every communion in

Christendom so to come together. It will be no uprush of a sudden emotionalism but the result of a process that has been going forward steadily for years. And evidences are on every hand of the practicability of closer denominational contacts, such as the community churches already functioning, the Federation of Churches, both local and national, and the Inter-Church Conference on Missions. These are steps toward the greater unity contemplated and show that what is contemplated can be neither foolish nor impossible, neither merely idealistic nor quixotic.

If we look thoughtfully at this conference and its purpose in the light of the world's needs of our time, surely it will make a reasonably strong appeal to us; but when we see it in the light of the needs of the foreign field alone, it will become to us an urgent necessity. Away back in 1900, we are told, that necessity was felt. Then and long before that year, it was realized that there were not only "needless duplication and expense" on the foreign field,

but also that "denominational forms of Christianity cast serious reproach upon the Kingdom of God" in the minds of those among whom our missionaries did their evangelistic and educational work. There is comity on the foreign field now, but that is not enough. An arresting portrayal of the need for a present-day united interdenominational approach to the mission problem may be had by consulting an article by Professor A. G. Baker in the *Journal of Religion*, July, 1926, on a survey of the thought concerning foreign missions for the last twenty-five years. There is no doubt that a pressing need on the foreign field calls for a united church movement to win India and China and Africa for Christ. Can we not then unite our denominational forces for the sake of that need?

I believe that such a union of denominational forces is possible. There are many differences among us, and some of these are a part of our deepest convictions. As Baptists, for example, we have certain convictions—"first principles" of our Christian

faith, we call them—which appear to us to be needed still in our world and to be faithfully adhered to and proclaimed. The conference has in its agenda a place and time for consideration of a creed for the united church. It is a conference on faith. What faith or creed shall be adopted? Now Baptists would resist strongly any fixed statement of belief to be received as authoritatively binding. They look upon the great creeds of the church with reverence, and perhaps "as aids to the religious life," but never to be "imposed upon the individual Christian, the local Church, or the denomination, as eternally authoritative and binding."

These last words are those of Dr. Douglas Clyde MacIntosh, Dwight professor of theology at Yale University, taken from his article on "The Baptists and Church Union" and to be found in the *Crozier Quarterly* of July, 1926. The whole statement is worth repeating. He writes: "Historically Baptists have constantly maintained that no fixed form of creedal

statement should be imposed upon the individual Christian, the local Church, or the denomination, as eternally authoritative and binding." And I find that Dr. E. Y. Mullins, president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, at Louisville, Kentucky, is in agreement with Dr. MacIntosh on this point. Dr. Mullins writes in the *Hibbert Journal*: "That no such thing as an authoritative creed was ever promulgated by any group of Baptists. . . . Sometimes Confessions of Faith," he continues, "were adopted by certain Baptist groups, but they have no binding authority whatever."

The reason of this Baptist attitude to a credo is found in their acceptance of the New Testament as the sufficient rule of faith and practice, and with this, as the very core of it, "loyalty to Christ." Dr. MacIntosh is a Baptist and a member of the Northern Baptist Convention through his church representation, while Dr. Mullins is a representative of the Southern Baptist Convention, and these two leading

teachers confirm our view that strong resistance would be made by Baptists against a fixed creed. But would this difference form a barrier to Christian unity? Or any other differences as to the so-called "sacraments," or "order" of the ministry, or "church polity"? These differences show the necessity of getting together around a conference table and, face to face, understandingly and appreciatively, obtaining other points of view.

Besides, unity would not mean uniformity. We can never all be of one mind. But we can all be of one purpose. "We may still differ," says Professor William Adams Brown, "in much and feel bound to defend our differences, but we shall differ as fellow-disciples and as fellow-worshipers." And Professor George Cross, of the University of Rochester, writes of a "unity in which all values of the free and unimpeded life and thought of the churches coöperating will be preserved." A united church therefore would seek to make room in its institutional expression for differences and

dearly held convictions. There would be variety but not uniformity. Uniformity would destroy the Christian freedom of the individual. The united church would function through "unity in variety."

It should be a unity, therefore, that would include individual religious freedom in relation to God and His word, variety of attitudes and experiences, and room for progress in Christian truth and life under the guidance of the Holy Spirit of truth. Speaking of unity and liberty in regard to Christian unity, Dr. Mullins says that "both are spiritual principles of the highest value. Liberty is possible without formal unity. But unity without liberty is a contradiction." Any kind of unity without either variety or liberty would be disastrous to the whole Protestant movement for Christian unity. There need be no sacrifices of convictions. If we have certain convictions that serve us as a barbed-wire barrier against worshiping and fellowshipping with other Christians, then we would better reëxamine them in the light that

lighteneth every one that cometh into the world.

See the Christ Stand!
He gazes—tears are in His eyes, and in His ears
The murmur of one thousand years.

Waiting until we Christians see more in Him than in Christology, more in His spirit than words or names, more in His redemptive love than in "orders," or in statements of belief. Do you ask what is the mission of a church? Let Father Tyrrell, whatever his likes or dislikes, answer: "The Church's Commission was to teach and propagate a new life, a new love, a new hope, a new Spirit—to teach what Christ taught and no more, and in the way He taught it, and not otherwise." Christian unity which will recognize that kind of a mission will center around Christ and cannot but be dynamic of the Christ will and motive.

Why then should not every Christian

denomination be represented at Lausanne? There will be much to gain and nothing of value to lose on the part of any representative at that conference. It will have no power to pledge or commit the churches participating in it. Its way is the way of understanding and of love. Old prejudices will be dissolved. New appreciations will be stirred, and there will be felt a joint responsibility for the welfare of a world. "If I knew all, I would love all." Love never separates. It always unites. The story is familiar in regard to Charles Lamb how, when a friend sought the privilege of introducing him to a man for whom Lamb had a preconceived dislike, he said: "I don't know him; I don't want to know him. I can never hate a man I know." The round table at Lausanne will react on all who participate in it in a better understanding of those from whom they may differ, and that will mean more Christian love. Some one may say: "See how much we are one in spirit now. See how closely we live together now. See how well we work together

and the many good things we do together now." Yes, but the one baffling reply is, as it has been repeated again and again, "We do not worship together"; and the non-church world passes by and says, "We have no use for a divided church or the sectarian Christianity it represents." What did the non-church world say of the early Christians? "Behold how these Christians love one another." And may not the latter be what shall be said of the conference at Lausanne in 1927?

These thoughts on the need for a united church, and on the possibility of it through unity in variety and the method of the conference at Lausanne as the method of understanding and of love, should combine to show us that the unity sought is not "unity of machinery." "We do not want unity by machinery any more than we want truth by machinery or prayers by machinery." There are great problems before our churches, and it is strongly believed that corporate action is needed to solve them. The spirits of men are yearning for the

solution of them as the spirit of Christ guides them into the greater vision of the world's needs. We have suggested how differences may exist in a great organization of the churches and yet unity obtain. And one reason of this would be the transcending purpose for the coming on earth of the Kingdom of God. "A common purpose in a great business," that is Christian unity when expressed consistently in an institutional form. And we as Baptists believe that all questions in regard to faith and order, government and worship, should be something like these: "Are they in harmony with the teachings of Christ? That is, are they true? Does the New Testament indorse them? Are they in keeping with the revealing spirit of Christ?" That kind of unity I believe in with all my being, and that kind of unity will be productive of rich fruitage in the years as they come. Here is the new apologetic to a world: a united church. Here will be found every follower of the lowly Nazarene with "one Master, one will, and one motive." Why

should it be longer delayed, this unity? Is it because "we will not hold out the hand of coequal fellowship to all whom God has blessed"? Have we all one Father? And are we all serving the one Lord? Listen to what He might say:

I will take them all under my wings, endow them with my spirit, illumine them with my light,
Till all Nations shall serve One God, speak one language, and sing one song.

And shall the church, His body, fail its Lord, in cöoperating with Him in that great work through a union of the churches so greatly needed in our world to-day?

LET US START THE MOVEMENT TOWARD UNITY

REV. JAMES I. VANCE, D.D., SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN, NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

AT the recent meeting at Pensacola of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, J. S. Lyons, D.D., Rev. J. H. Lacy, D.D., Rev. I. S. McElroy, D.D., and myself were appointed as delegates from our church to the World Conference on Faith and Order, which is to be held in Lausanne, Switzerland, in August, 1927. Dr. S. H. Chester has been a member of the Continuation Committee of the conference since its first preliminary meeting at Geneva in 1920, and expects to attend the conference in that capacity. The chairman of the commission of our church was Dr. Russell Cecil, up to the time of his death. The present chairman is Dr. J. Horace Lacy.

This movement is in the interest of the

cause of church unity originated at the General Convention of the American Episcopal Church in 1910, and that church has ever since taken a leading part in its promotion. The World Conference, however, has far outgrown the proportions of a denominational enterprise, eighty-three different ecclesiastical bodies having appointed representatives on its commissions.

The idea of the movement is to make the necessary preliminary explorations looking toward the unity of the church of Christ, which is composed of all true believers throughout the world, in some visible form, such as the world can recognize, and thereby be convinced that Christ's claim to have been sent of God is true. Just what the nature and mode of this unity shall be no one has as yet attempted specifically to define. The following statement of Bishop Charles H. Brent, president of the Continuation Committee, should, it seems to me, quiet anxiety on that subject: "The thought in our minds is to bring qualified men of every Communion together to face

their differences on all matters pertaining to Christian Faith and Order, with the hope and expectation that many difficulties will fade away in friendly discussion, and that a common acceptance of fundamentals will create a unity rich in diversity. Uniformity is not sought after. We feel that every sincere and Christian body exists by virtue of the life that is in it; that it is protecting and exalting some aspect of the truth; that such treasures, often garnered after deep and prolonged suffering, should be placed at the disposal of the entire Christian Church."

During his service as a missionary in the Philippines previous to his appointment as bishop of Western New York, Bishop Brent acquired the missionary point of view, which will always be found inconsistent with anything narrow and small and sectarian. A number of local conferences of the Continuation Committee of which he is chairman have been held in this country, at which the utmost frankness and freedom of expression was always encouraged, and

which already have resulted in the doing away with much misunderstanding and the consequent bringing about of a more tolerant and friendly attitude toward each other of the churches represented in the movement.

A meeting of the Continuation Committee was held at Stockholm in August of 1925 in connection with the meeting of the World Conference on the Life and Work of the Church, at which a tentative agenda for the Lausanne Conference of 1927 was prepared, as a basis for preliminary discussion by local groups of topics to be dealt with at the approaching World Conference. The topics mentioned in this agenda, to which others may be added by the Continuation Committee before the World Conference meets, are such as the call to unity, the church's common confession of faith, the church's ministry and form of organization, the sacraments, the unity of Christendom, and the place of different churches within it.

As a matter of course the conference will

possess no legislative powers. It will not adopt any resolutions, except those which may be arrived at by a unanimous vote, and which will be understood as only interpreting the mind of the delegates present, and as having no binding force on the churches which they represent.

It has been a matter of gratification to me that our church has had a part in this movement from its very beginning, and that our successive Assemblies without exception have given it their indorsement and encouragement. Those of us who have been appointed to represent our church at the World Conference feel that we have been charged with a serious responsibility and are anxious that those whom we represent should have the kind of interest that can come only from their being properly informed as to what the movement is and what it stands for. Copies of leaflets and pamphlet literature relating to the conference may be had free on application to the Secretariat, Box 226, Boston, Massachusetts.

I may say in conclusion that no one expects the World Conference that is to be held at Lausanne fully to achieve the complete unification of the scattered members of the flock of Christ as we find them to-day, in all their variety of creed and polity and forms of worship, growing out of differences of race and national and historical traditions. It may take more than another generation to reach the goal toward which this conference is understood to be only a first step. When once a movement is started, however, it may quicken its pace more rapidly than we would anticipate. It is characteristic of all great movements that they have slow beginnings and accelerate their pace as they progress toward their destined goal; and it may be that there are people now living on the earth who will still be here to see the final and complete fulfilment of the Saviour's prayer, that His disciples, in all that pertains to the essentials of their faith and life, may be one even as He and the Father are one.

THE OBSTACLES CAN BE OVERCOME

REV. DAN FREEMAN BRADLEY, PASTOR, PILGRIM CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, CLEVELAND, OHIO; ASSOCIATE MODERATOR, NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES

AS a thoroughbred Congregationalist, with a pedigree in the denomination which carries back to Davenport and the founding of New Haven, I have no hesitation in answering the question, "Can the churches unite?" in an unequivocal affirmative. And lest I should seem to speak without due knowledge of the difficulties, I will proceed to explain that my father sailed as a pioneer foreign missionary under a society supported jointly by Presbyterian, Congregational, and Dutch Reformed churches. My mother was con-

verted in a Campbellite meeting, attended the Methodist Church, became a Congregationalist, and died a Presbyterian. In my boyhood, in the mission station, we attended a union church, pastored by a Baptist, who regularly each Sunday read the evening prayer service from the Church of England Prayer-book. In my own ministry, I have been in constant connection with men of several denominations and have for several years been associated on committees of our denomination having the purpose of proposing union with other denominations. It was my privilege to be secretary of the meeting when nineteen Protestant denominations in Cleveland were federated for local work, and that federation is most active and useful. I was pastor of the church in which our Congregational National Council held its biennium and discussed a proposed merger with United Brethren and Methodist Protestant churches; and in our recent effort to join the Congregational and Presbyterian churches in actual organic union, I had

the high honor of writing the document which united a local Presbyterian and Congregational church. It is therefore with a full knowledge of the difficulties in the way, and the possibilities of the situation, that once more I answer the question, "Can the churches unite?" with an emphatic affirmative.

One of the arguments offered during the debate in our church regarding union with the United Brethren was that Congregationalists and United Brethren were so different in temperament and tradition as to make union undesirable if not impossible. The fallacy of the reasoning was easily shown by presentation of the fact that our local Congregational churches and pastors differed prodigiously in temperament and tradition, as for example the New England churches on the one hand, and the South Dakota churches, made up of Swedes, Norwegians, Sioux Indians, Russians, and all elements of a mingled immigration, on the other. Nevertheless there was not the slightest difficulty of fellow-

ship on a Congregational basis locally or nationally. As a matter of fact in New England we have Congregational churches of several races and several sorts of traditions, and in Boston itself are two strong churches a mile apart—one strictly fundamentalist from the pastor to the janitor, and the other modernist of the most pronounced type—yet they dwell together in the same local association on friendly terms. Differences of the sort mentioned may be dismissed, as constituting no barrier whatever to unity, where there is the presence of a Christian common sense.

From the Congregationalist point of view, all followers of the Lord Jesus Christ are our brethren. We acknowledge the validity of the faith and order of all Christians. We have no difficulties as regards baptism or the celebration of the Lord's supper.

In some of our churches baptism is administered in two ways—and certain people are accepted without physical baptism, as in the case of Quakers. As to the eucha-

rist, we have varying opinions from the sacramentarian to that of the memorialist, and a pastor who should reserve the elements for private devotion would find nothing to prevent him in our body. Uniformity of practice in the sacraments has never been deemed important with us; emphasis is put upon the reverence and worship of the service. We baptize the little children when they are brought, but infant baptism is entirely optional with the parents. For with us as a rule baptism is not held to possess any direct power of regeneration, although there is nothing to prevent belief in such power.

We accept without hesitation members of any other Christian denomination, Catholic or Protestant, by letter of dismission or on presentation of certificates of confirmation. We accept as perfectly valid the ordination of ministers in any way deemed appropriate in their several churches, and when such ministers seek service with us we receive them on their credentials of good standing. An Episcopal, Methodist,

or Presbyterian pastor serving one of our churches becomes at once a member of our ecclesiastical association, to which the church he serves belongs. A Catholic priest or Unitarian pastor would have similar standing. We have a statement of faith, drawn with great care, but binding on no church of our order. In other words, we have much freedom in our fellowship for variants in doctrine, polity, and points of view. We think ours is a most "roomy" church. We could unite with all other denominations at once, provided that we are not required to surrender our freedom. And we would not ask of our brethren that they give up one jot or tittle of whatever values they may cherish in their history, tradition or practice, or doctrine.

In the past the church has based its fellowship on the principle of *exclusion* of all who fail to meet a certain standard of creed, polity, or practice. So long as that principle is applied to the life of the church, unity is impossible. It stands like a wall to inclose the elect, with a gate

which is guarded by the ticket-taker. You must believe this, and do that, and be inducted in a certain way. Unity will come and will be easy when the churches practise the principles of *inclusion.* The church will easily unite when it accepts as valid more than one kind of Christian experience, belief, or practice. For long centuries the churches have been narrowing the walls of *exclusion,* making strait the gate of fellowship—and adding conditions of church membership which must be amazing to the Master who included all kinds of folks in His own personal following. Some of the conditions of fellowship now insisted upon were utterly unknown to the Master Himself or his apostles. When we return to His great inclusive invitation, then we shall have unity.

A further stumbling-block in the way of unity is the fear lest some of the cherished values developed in the history of a denomination may be lost. If that point is guarded, unity will be easy. If we can come together with others bringing our bric-à-

brac with us—and not be compelled to undergo a censorship of our opinions or practices or even our superstitions—we should be glad to come at once. And we shall not make faces, or say harsh things about the opinions, practices, or even superstitions of those who are willing to come with us and let us come with them.

Thus if Congregationalist and Presbyterian pastors were acknowledged by Episcopal churches to be adequately ordained, so that all sacraments which are administered by them are considered valid; if Baptists would consent to commune with Methodists and Lutherans who are baptized by the mode of sprinkling; if Lutherans were to acknowledge the confessed faith of Presbyterians and Baptists as adequate; if the Catholics and Greeks ceased to forbid intermarriage between their young people and Protestants; if the dead bodies of Lutherans, Evangelicals, and Catholics were to be admitted for burial in the same consecrated ground—our Christian churches could unite.

It will be observed that these obstacles are all more or less artificial, and entirely apart from the teaching of Our Lord in the New Testament. As a matter of fact all Christians are united in loyalty and obedience to Jesus Christ. All Christians acknowledge His authority in morals and religion. All Christians worship at His cross. They are one, except in the details of method and practice developed in their several histories. When all Christians acknowledge these things and emphasize their unities and soft-pedal their differences, the church will be one.

Our modern view of marriage might be an illustration of the kind of union we Congregationalists would welcome. When young people marry now, neither bride nor groom gives up anything. Their vows are identical. They *pool* all their assets and liabilities. And they are agreeable and pleasant about the little foibles and fussinesses of each other because they *love* each other. And love can help one to appreciate everything that is honest and sincere, on

the part of the loved one. Our churches used to *hate* each other. That state of mind has passed. We now *tolerate* each other. That is progress. By and by we shall *fall in love*. The rest will be easy, and we shall have a church rich with all the accumulations made by 150 groups working separately for centuries, their value assembled together to be the precious treasure of all. We Congregationalists have ceased to hate, and long have tolerated, but are right now *falling in love*. We are actually "making dates" with Presbyterians and others. We should like to bring things to an issue. But we are not sure of the girl. Is she also in love with us? "There's the rub." If she is —life for us will be "one grand sweet song." For we are enthusiastically for the unity for which our dear Lord prayed.

THE NORMAL CONDITION OF CHRISTIANITY IS UNITY

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THE churches have thought so long in terms of division that it is difficult to bring them to think in terms of unity; but if one stops to think at all, he can easily see that the normal condition of Christianity is unity. Jesus said, "One is your master and all ye are brethren." Any man knows that brothers ought to be on speaking terms and know how to behave toward each other.

Instead of spending millions of dollars, as the churches are annually doing, to maintain their peculiarities, these millions of dollars, backed by the spirit of Christ, must be turned into those channels that

have to do with proper attitudes among Christians, until all who have taken the name of Christ will know how to behave toward their brother Christians, irrespective of creed or traditional isolation.

It is the greatest issue to-day in the world. The churches can never function properly, divided as they are. We have got to get together. There is not another issue in the world that overshadows this. Because the churches are not busying themselves more in the advancement of a united Christendom is no reason at all that the issue is not paramount. The churches must be brought to see that their old policies of separation are outworn and moth-eaten.

In 1908 the Protestants got together in social service by establishing the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, which, from an annual budget of $5000, had attained an annual budget of about $300,000 and is bringing the divided Protestant household into coöperation in the moral issues of these times. In 1925 the Universal Christian Conference on

Life and Work at Stockholm called together not only Protestants and Anglicans, but representatives from the Greek Catholics, known as the Eastern Orthodox Churches, numbering 133,000,000 members. It was a marvelous gathering and furnished a great lesson in coöperative Christianity. In 1927 the World Conference on Faith and Order will meet at Lausanne, Switzerland, to face the theological problems of a divided Christendom. All the churches which were represented at the Stockholm Conference will be there, and it is the wish of all that the Roman Catholics may come. They have been invited. Whether they come or not, the pope has expressed himself kindly toward the conference.

More than fifteen hundred years ago Julian said that if the Christians could be so divided as to break their brotherhood, they would appear ridiculous in the eyes of the world. What the Roman emperor could not do to the church, the church has proudly done to itself. Because it is an-

cient, many think it is sacred. The older the division the greater the sin, though our memories are dulled.

In addition to our broken brotherhood there has grown up through the years a party pride, pride of communion, so that it is common to hear it said: "I am proud that I am a Roman Catholic"; or "that I am a Baptist"; or "that I am a Methodist"; or "that I am a Disciple." This party pride or party rivalry has so concealed Jesus as to make Him, in many instances, an obscure character in these times.

A divided church is a denial of the foundation principles of Christianity as affirmed by the Apostle Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians. It is a more effective denial than that of out-and-out atheism. Compare the opponents of Christianity from the days of Lucian, Celsus, and Porphyry down to modern times, and their injury to Christianity has been trifling compared with the injury done Christianity by a divided Christendom, because a di-

vided church is antisocial, immoral, and unspiritual.

By social is meant that which pertains to society, living together, holding friendly intercourse, and cultivating companionship. But a divided church breaks up the social life, from the home to the general affairs of the community. How frequently has it been said, where the husband and wife are members of different communions, "We never mention the church and never discuss religion in our home." It is, perhaps, the best way to meet the scandal of a divided church, but it reveals, at once, the antisocial results of division. Christianity is a social religion, and one of its functions is to strengthen the social life of people.

By moral is meant that which pertains to the conduct and spirit of man toward God and toward his fellows with reference to right and wrong and to obligations to duty. It needs no force of argument to affirm that it is the duty of Christians to love one another. But a divided church is the advertisement to the world that we do

not love one another. From a moral obligation of love we pass without concern to the immoral attitude of unlove. We talk about following Jesus, and we quarrel over a dozen disputed and unsettled questions, making them tests of fellowship, when we know that the only sign of Christian discipleship is that left us by Jesus when He said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." But a divided Christianity, changing conduct and spirit from normal fellowship into party groups, makes a divided church immoral in conduct and spirit.

By spiritual is meant that which pertains to the soul or the inner man. A divided Christianity dealing with motives, attitudes, and aspirations weakens these vital forces that have to do with man's growth toward God. A divided church can no more attain to the best in spiritual experience than a divided home, where husband and wife are divorced, can attain to the best in ethical example.

If it be said, and it often is said, that the unity of the whole church is impossible —when we think of the Roman Catholic Church, on one hand, with its great antiquity, wonderful organization, and growing power, and, on the other hand, the Society of Friends, without baptism or the Lord's supper, but whose spiritual characters have set them in the front rank of fine examples of Christian living—the answer is that, if the union of Christendom is not possible, then either Christianity is not of God, or all Christian communions are on a false basis. The notion of one church's holding all the truth and all the others holding fragmentary parts of truth belongs to the nursery of bygone days.

But with the belief that Christianity is of God and that all communions are the holders of some truth, we are summoned by God to advance in conference, in coöperation, and in tolerance. In conference we talk at first-hand regarding our differences and find new understandings and form new appreciations. In coöperation we learn to

work side by side for a common end, discovering, as we work together, new worth in those from whom we differ. In tolerance we advance to a sympathetic attitude of mind toward those from whom we differ. Phillips Brooks rightly says, "In tolerance there are two elements—first, positive conviction and, second, sympathy with men whose convictions differ from our own." It is sometimes thought that tolerance is based upon indifference or uncertainty. But it is just the opposite. It is the intolerant who is afraid, and so he avoids conference and refuses coöperation, and sometimes he expresses his intolerance in bigotry and may go to the extent of persecution. He tries to think that he is sure. He may affirm it defiantly. Do not believe him. He is resorting to a false method to establish a false position. It is the tolerant who is unafraid. He proves that he is unafraid by trusting others in conference and in coöperation. The most tolerant person in all history was Jesus, who went to the cross unafraid and intrusted his religion to

a few simple-minded Jews of Galilee. The question that faces us is: are we able to be Christian enough to be unafraid to trust other Christians with the truth of Christ?

The World Conference on Faith and Order at Lausanne next August has in it large possibilities. The interest of Christian leaders of the various communions is heartening in their attempts to make this possibility a reality.

THE UNITED CHURCH ALREADY EXISTS

REV. FREDERICK H. KNUBEL, D.D., LL.D.,
PRESIDENT, THE UNITED LUTHERAN
CHURCH IN AMERICA

THE average Christian asks again and again, "Why do not all churches unite?" Evidently the usual answers have not satisfied him. The reason may be that something is lacking in our replies. Perhaps some truth is being left in the background which the ordinary Christian can understand and which the informed Christian is neglecting. The writer believes such to be the case. The best answer to the inquiry is that the united church already exists and that its reality and unity will ultimately become fully clear, openly manifest to all.

To the eyes of men it appears that there

is not one church, but only many churches. These same men, however, read detective stories. They see many clues, confused and seemingly contradictory. Nevertheless they believe that all the genuine clues are somehow related to the mystery and will in the end be clearly shown in their unity. How happy they are if they have discerned the solution before the author reveals it! The same studious discernment might profitably be bestowed upon the mystery of a seemingly divided church. As another illustration, we see two separate individuals become lovers. They believe fully in an essential unity of their lives, unseen by others. In the end that unity becomes a manifest reality to everybody in the blessed facts of marriage. The Bible uses this very illustration of marriage to depict the unity of the church with its Lord. Just once more, to the eyes of men it appears that mankind is not one. The differences in race and nationality are so great that not long ago the unity of humanity as declared in the Bible was openly derided. Nevertheless we now

believe that the current of blood in all men's veins is continuous. We believe that the unity of humanity already exists and are expecting the reality thereof to become at last an open manifestation.

In matters like those just mentioned men recognize genuine unities to exist without seeing them. Later they see them. So it is with the united church. A Christian must realize that he means something important and real when he says in the Apostles' Creed, "I believe in the holy catholic Church," or more definitely in the Nicene Creed, "I believe in *one* holy catholic and apostolic Church." He may not see it, but he believes in its reality.

This is the beginning of an answer to the eager question, "Why do not all the churches unite?" We hear so much about the divisions of the church, and the sad spectacle of a divided church is so frequently portrayed, that the actuality of the one church, which is the only true church, is lost from the thoughts of most Christians or is regarded as an unimpor-

tant vague dream. The continual stress upon an external, a visible union of churches blinds us to the glorious fact. All thought and effort to unite the churches must begin with a most intense study of the one church which already exists—the source of its unity, the power of that unity, the development of the unity. Let us aim to study it here in the simplest possible manner.

The unity is first of all the oneness of all believers in Jesus Christ. It begins before His cross, where all men are brought to a common level. All distinctions among them cease there. A common sin and a common forgiveness unite all those who have become His followers. He there imparts His life to them, and *this continued life of His in them all* further unites them. Thus the church is His body, His bride. Wherever His gospel is proclaimed, His word preached, and His sacraments administered, there the leveling of men takes place, there His life is imparted, there the church exists.

This unity is furthermore one of faith. All who are in the church are believers, having a common faith in Christ as the Saviour of the world and the Revealer of the will and love of God the Father. This faith has become the core of their lives. In their life-centers therefore they are united.

The unity is also one in holiness. Sin, the supreme blemish and weakness of life, has been covered. The robe of Christ's righteousness has been cast about all believers. Then also a passionate purpose for holiness inevitably possesses all those in whom He dwells.

Finally the united church stretches over the ages. It includes more than the believers in the churches of the present. Time and place and death do not interfere with it.

This is the unity, this is the church, that our hearts must ever hold in sight. Our bodily eyes cannot see it, for it consists as just stated in the unseen Christ; of faith and therefore not of sight; in a holiness seemingly contradicted by the remaining

sins of believers; of saints of the past, present, and future.

The reader who has never before earnestly grappled this fact of the united church, and who has thought only of the many churches he sees, may be saying at this point that the idea seems a will-o'-the-wisp. To grasp it seems like the effort some bright morning to recall a vague confused dream of the past night. That reader is urged to persevere. This is a mystery of course, but mysteries attract real men. It is a more wonderful, intricate, beautiful mystery than any story-book ever described, and it is true; we are trying to see that fellowship of men which is deeper than all other associations they have, which holds them together in unselfishness, which establishes an eternal kinship. We are aiming to behold these men, though still retaining selfishness, though continuing to commit sins, taken into deepest oneness with the holiness and power of God. There is mystery in such an idea. Naturally therefore a full view of the reality evades

us. Our faith, however, must hold it fast. If this church does not exist, Christianity is a colossal delusion.

We must realize furthermore that this church is the most powerful organism on earth. Even in its present state it is a living body, bound in an unbreakable union, which is more efficient and more effective than any nation, or alliance of nations, or church, or group of churches, or other organization, could possibly be. It is the unseen supreme force which in the end controls all the plans and doings of men. All of this is true because the life of the Almighty is within this church. When men speak of uniting the churches they often grow eloquent over the increased efficiency thus to be gained. Such eloquence is dangerous to us if as a result we forget the dominant strength already existing in the true church. Let us not aim to unite the churches if our purpose is only to make a shallow display of strength before the world by a supposed "united front."

Only one more item concerning this

united church needs to be mentioned. Since the unity is a living one, it is also a *growing* unity. A process is going on providentially in the history of mankind whereby the reality develops and whereby it will ultimately come out into full clearness. Paul speaks of it thus: "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ . . . speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." The growth takes place in all four elements of the unity mentioned above. It is a growth into Christ, as we abide in Him and He in us. It is a growth in faith, including the confession thereof and including everyday trust. It is a growth in holiness. It is a growth of the ages, adding the saints of the ever new times, without whom we are not made perfect. It is God's revelation which causes the growth. That revelation lasts as the generations of men come and go. It is His word which makes the church.

This growth of the true church cannot be hurried to a true realization by the manufactured conceptions of men. In all considerations as to uniting the churches, let us recognize that the hurried establishment of an external union would hinder the true process, would check and stunt the growth.

In all that has been said hitherto it may seem as though a negative answer were being given to the question, "Can the churches unite?" Such is not actually the case. Rather we have indicated the only true approach to such union. We must keep ever before us the ideal which has been stated. We must know that it is the only true church. We must recognize that it is not only an ideal, but a reality—a reality that is developing, even toward open manifestation. Our only danger is that good human intentions for union may hinder divine purposes in the development of the true unity. On the other hand we are now prepared to see how the churches, even while not united, may and should manifest the actual unity of the church.

We are also ready to note how the churches can prepare the way for the true development.

The churches will fulfil their responsibilities if each one aims to be an expression of the one true church. That means that each denomination will aim for unity within itself. It means more, however. Each church should seek to express in its own life those facts which have several times been enumerated concerning the true church.

For instance, we saw the true church to be one in Jesus Christ, the Head. All churches therefore should give themselves primarily to a loyal exaltation of Him in His deity and in the fullness of His Saviourhood on the cross. Thus will they grow in Him and thus also grow together. So will they furthermore reveal plainly to all men the reality of the united church. The denominations must search their own lives in this respect if the churches are to unite.

We saw also that the true church's unity

is one of faith. The followers of Jesus all have faith in Him as the center of their life. It is by their unfailing profession of this faith that the oneness of all denominations, churches, is made manifest. This profession, however, goes further. Christians for all the centuries have been searching the revelation of God. Their Christian experience has deeply shown to them its meanings. Thus they have come to firm beliefs about Christ and His gospel. These beliefs they must confess and openly declare. This is a part of their Christian profession. The churches are preachers, teachers. In such activity they must be full, free, and courageous. Truth cannot be trimmed. Convictions cannot be abandoned as trifles. This is the reason that those differences have come into existence whereby the many churches, denominations, arose. The average Christian sometimes wishes the churches to unite without regard for these differences. This is impossible unless truth is to be set at naught and courageous devotion to it is to be discouraged. Indeed

the very earnestness of the churches in their confession of the truth they have discerned is an evidence of their unity in seeking the truth. By constant brave testimony the truth will prevail and the increase of truth will be gained. It is only as such confessors that the churches can in the end unite.

It is unquestionably true, however, that every church, denomination, must for the sake of the true church's unity continually examine itself as to whether it holds such testimonies concerning Christ and His gospel as justify it in maintaining a separate identity. Furthermore the churches must at all times be eager to approach one another without hostility, jealousy, suspicion, or pride, in the sincere and humble desire to give and receive Christian service, to measure their agreements and disagreements as to Christian truth. An important World Conference for this purpose is planned for 1927.

In concluding our inquiry we recall that holiness is an element in the unity of the

true church. In all the denominations this element is present, revealing their oneness even to-day. The manifestation is weak, we know. We confess our failures to live ideal Christian lives. The marks of holiness are nevertheless common to all Christians, are an evidence of the power which they possess in common, and are recognized by the world.

Holiness, however, is essentially unselfishness. Its positive manifestation is love. It is by love that faith is proved, that the presence of the living Christ is shown. It is through love in all the churches that the unity of the true church is manifested. We are referring to the love of Christians for one another, and also the love of Christians for a world in need. As to the former, we have Christ's words, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." We need emphasis, practical emphasis, upon this manifestation of the church's unity. Denominations of Christians need to carry the appeal in their hearts. Unlovely words are

spoken. Unseemly deeds are done, indefensible interference with one another's work can be found, unsightly rivalry is seen, sectarian proselytism is practised even at the present day, unwillingness for mutual recognition is encountered, unreadiness for possible coöperation exists. Yet the hearts of Christians become overswept again and again by love, the love of the brethren. The unity of the church grows clear.

We have space here for only a word as to the love of Christians for mankind in its great need. All the churches furthermore have much to learn on the subject of serving love. However, even now the world never thinks of deeds of love without thinking of the church, and the world knows that all these deeds are one.

HOW TO MAKE MANIFEST THE ALREADY EXISTING UNITY

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CAN the churches unite? Let me tell you a story.

Once upon a time a Catholic and a Protestant were angrily arguing about their religion. Along came a Buddhist. "What are you quarreling about?" he asked in some surprise. "You both believe in Christ as head of the church, redeemer of the world. You have both been baptized in His name."

The arrival of the Buddhist cleared the atmosphere. It clarified the issue. As an outsider he saw the essential unity of these two believers in Christ, and he could not understand their quarrel.

The question to-day is not so much

whether the churches can unite, but whether they can show forth their essential unity. The problem is to make manifest the unity which already exists. Christ is the head of the church. The church is His body. Christians are united to Christ through membership in His body. Here is an indestructible unity at the outset—unity in the one Lord through the one baptism; the unity of a common membership, a common discipleship, and a common experience. That unity exists in spite of all the sects of Christendom and all the powers of hell. It is not our business to make unity. God has done that. It is our business to make it apparent. It is ours to try to bring ourselves and others into such visible unity in the one church of Christ that an unbelieving world will be convinced. How can we show a united front?

There are two ways of approaching the realization of unity: the way of mutual concession, and the way of mutual contribution. Those bodies which are nearest akin might consolidate through mutual surren-

der of their differences. A similar consolidation might then be repeated with the resultant bodies. And so on. Such initial steps would appear to be entirely practicable and would be a consummation devoutly to be wished. Ultimately they might lead to the final goal. This method of approach, however, is open to criticism. It is the way of compromise rather than comprehension. It demands concessions in an enterprise that calls for contributions. Each concession may mean the forfeiture of some spiritual value. Concessions in one direction would probably have to be followed by concessions in another. Honest convictions touching fundamental orthodoxy might soon become involved. And at the end of a series of cautious concessions a union might be reached at the expense of life and truth. In this case the resultant church would not be worth dying for nor be able to produce saints and martyrs.

The other way of approaching the subject is the way of faith. Faith in God, loyalty to Christ, obedience to His will, a

readiness to lose our churches for His sake —is not this Christ's way? It is along no highway of man's building that the answer to Christ's prayer will come. It is through no mechanical process. It is by no ecclesiastical bargaining. It will come through a venture of faith in Christ and through trust in the brethren. When Christ instituted the great sacrament of unity, He required no preliminary agreement reaching out into the sphere of philosophy and metaphysics. "Take, eat," He said. "This is my body. Do this." It was an act of faith that was required, not a full understanding; an act in which the learned and the unlearned could participate with equal affection and adoration. So with the unity of the body. It cannot be materialized through an intellectual agreement covering a wide range of thought, but it can be realized through the act of faith in a Person and through the oblation of the will. Christlikeness, within the household of faith, if raised to a sufficiently high level, will, in itself and by itself, restore the wholeness of the

church; Christlikeness, and that alone, will envelop within the unity those principles of order and liberty that are essential to the solidarity of the Christian society.

These are the two methods of approach, the way of caution and the way of venture. The one takes one trembling step at a time; the other stakes everything on God. The one has been repeatedly tried and has been uniformly abortive. The other has never been tried. And, after all, is not the larger plan more practicable and more hopeful than the piecemeal plan? The difficulties of reconciliation are often in inverse ratio to the proximity of the disputants. Family quarrels are notoriously hard to settle.

Unity through a venture of faith—are the churches ready for it? It certainly will not come through argument. Are the churches prepared to accept the positive principles (not the negative, for people are generally right in their affirmations and wrong in their negations) of Catholi-

cism and Protestantism, in faith that, when housed under the same roof, contact and fellowship will remove the difficulties and disarm the hostilities that the separated parts have toward each other? That is the question.

In order to create the atmosphere in which unity shall thrive and show itself to the world, we must do a number of things.

We must first confess the sin of schism —the sin, I say, not simply its economic disadvantage, its short-sighted policy, its unstatesmanlike method, its unstrategic warfare with the world, but its sin.

We must also confess our part in the sin. It is easy to confess sin in the abstract. What is needed is an honest though humiliating acknowledgment of our part in the making and in the perpetuating of schism. And let us cease confessing other people's sins. Let them confess their own. We are not authorized to do it for them. Until the churches are convicted of sin, there will be little progress toward the manifestation of unity.

We must try to get the point of view of the other man for the sake of the enrichment of our own minds. Assume that the things that mean nothing to us mean much to their advocates. The papacy must be better than its enemies think it is, or else the world has had many brilliant fools. Because the Methodists left the Anglican Church, for reasons which do us no credit, are we Episcopalians to go on estimating Methodism at its worst? Methodism must be something better than some people think it is, or it would not have brought so many thousands nearer to their God. Presbyterianism must be more than some have thought, else it would not have captivated the minds and dominated the lives of a strong intellectual people.

We must lend our influence to the promotion of frank and friendly conferences on our differences.

Let us aim high. Let us not be afraid to place organic unity before us as the goal, and let us not despair of comprising all Christendom within it. There may be inter-

mediate steps to be taken, but they are steps on the journey, not stopping-places. Interdenominationalism may do some good in places where it does no harm. So far it seems only to have pronounced its blessing on a state of division which it deplores. Federation may do much good where it is workable. Its great value seems to be the witness that it bears to the necessity of something more than federation. Coöperation in good works is absolutely necessary so far as it is practicable between churches which come at things in directly opposite ways. But organic unity has in it all that these "flickering expedients" have and infinitely more. Interdenominationalism, federation, the coöperation of unattached bodies, have just enough merit in them to be tantalizing, but not enough merit to warrant their advocates in devoting precious time to their promotion. They have this merit, that they indicate that men no longer apotheosize divisions and that they are beginning to dream of better things.

When Christians the world over voice their passion for unity at the mass and in the prayer-meeting, something wonderful will surely happen.

Looking broadly over Christendom, there are outstanding elements of interior structure which appear to have demonstrated their right to be regarded as permanent features of the Christian church.

The positive principles of Protestantism are permanent. They are not ephemeral. They were not discovered by Protestantism. They were recovered. Is it conversion? Is it conscious discipleship to Christ? Is it free accessibility to God in prayer? Is it justification by faith? Is it a belief in Holy Scripture? They are the property of Christians everywhere. They are not seriously in dispute. The problem is that of organically relating the parts to the whole.

The faith is permanent. Again the problem of unity is not that of discovering or rediscovering the Christian faith. It is the problem of fighting together under the

banner of the orthodox faith with all the orderliness of an army of God. What is the faith? It is the body of truth, formulated from the Scriptures, which has the outward sanction of an undivided church and the inward sanction of universal experience. The faith! It is the watchword of millions of Christians in the East. By it they live. For it they die. It is not theirs alone. Occident and Orient can unite in singing:

> Faith of our fathers, Holy Faith,
> We will be true to thee till death.

The sacramental system is permanent. A religion which revolves around the incarnation cannot be other than a sacramental religion. If a sacrament is defined simply as "a visible sign of an invisible grace," the number of them will be large. If the definition is drawn more tightly, the number will be reduced. But the truth of the value of the thing itself is not dependent upon any definition. There has been a consensus concerning the two great sacra-

ments of baptism and eucharist. The dissensus concerning other means of grace cannot rightly be erected into a barrier against a united church.

Episcopacy is a permanent feature of the church. Its importance lies not in the institution itself but in the underlying principle of continuity and order which it embodies. No attempt is made here to argue the question or to contrast it with the papacy or the "historic presbyterate" or to discuss its origin. This is only a bird's-eye view of the things which for centuries have stood out with a prominence that predicates their permanence.

The papacy is permanent. One can respectfully distinguish between the papacy and papalism. A constitutional head is not out of harmony with democracy nor with vital Christianity. A constitutional papacy makes no break with the past, contains no prejudice against the future, is not inimical to democracy; and it is not practicable to eliminate it from a world-wide Christian fellowship.

The substance of it all is this. A new age is dawning. Vital principles are coming to birth. That new age is to be indelibly stamped with internationalism, with a new social order and a wider ideal of brotherhood. These things are the outgrowth of Christianity. They must not be cut off from the church. They must be housed within it. Can our chaotic Christianity preach and practise the gospel of brotherhood in Jesus Christ to a world that is beginning to dream of a Universal Kingdom of God? Will they abandon their self-consciousness and enter upon a self-forgetful adventure for the visible unity of the people of God? Will they discern the signs of our times? Will they risk a trial of faith? Risks! Why talk of risks when the only risk is that of making the grand discovery that things which men thought were contradictory are really complementary? "Live dangerously," says Nietzsche. Live courageously. Courage is the keen desire for life which takes the form of a challenge to death. God give the

churches faith and courage to stake everything on Him!

It is unnecessary to say that such a venture as the World Conference on Faith and Order, unique in the world's history, sublime in its purpose, requires on the part of its promoters abundant charity, wide sympathy, a capacity for discovering spiritual wealth in unexpected quarters, an open mind that seeks only the truth, a heart that loves the whole brotherhood, a freedom from inherited pride and prejudice, and the cultivation of a catholic and cosmopolitan temper.

On first thought the bigness of the plan seems to make it impractical, if not impossible. On second thought, however, it is its bigness which seems to make it possible and practical. Its wide scope lifts it above local difficulties. It lifts it above the spirit of the age into the spirit of the ages. There is scarcely a nation in the world to-day wherein a national conference for the same purpose could take place. Political complications, educational con-

troversies, social inequalities between established churches—these and conditions such as these make national conferences on faith and order quite impractical. But a world conference lifts the whole subject above those national and artificial barriers that men erect between themselves; it lifts it above the realm of racial types and local phases; it lifts it above the incidents and accidents and tragedies of history into the clearer vision of the universality of Christ and the unity of His church. Multitudinous difficulties automatically disappear as saints and scholars of many lands and churches meet to contemplate a world Saviour, saving a whole world, through a world church.

MANY MANSIONS [1]

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IS the widespread recognition, that the church deals primarily with the life of Christ, in groups of His followers, likely to bring us to some organization that will itself be a visible sign of the unity to which Christians are coming? Some such unity will surely come if the groups of Christians keep in mind two primary human characteristics never more clearly manifest than in social groups to-day: the desire for preservation of whatever is spiritually distinctive in the separate group lives on

[1] In this article, Bishop McConnell has drawn freely from his book, *Living Together,* published by the Abingdon Press. The publisher has granted permission for the use of these quotations.

the one hand, and the desire for closer fellowship with all bodies of Christians on the other. I do not think this unity will ever come by an artificially efficient leveling process. We need the richness and fullness of variety and diversity in the kingdom of God. The one force that will at last bring us together will be a wholehearted desire to spread the life of Christ among men. The one bond that will hold us together will be this desire joined to frank recognition of the legitimacy of all honest methods of seeking to further that main purpose.

In my Father's house are many mansions! Suppose we think of the church on earth as the vast home of the Father's children. Union would then mean living under the same roof as members of the Father's household. The rooms might be different. One might seem like a workshop, another like a library, another like an art-gallery, another like a debating-room, another like a social hall. There would be as many rooms as there are broad and

general human types, for all these diversities have to be preserved for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.

Union is not helped on so much by the man who slackens his zeal for his religious group in the name of a loyalty for a general church, as by the man who seeks to make his group contribute distinctly to the Christian ideal at the same time that he increases his respect for all others in like groups who are working with a like aim. Paradoxical as it may sound, the man who is whole-heartedly loyal to his group makes that group of such consequence everywhere that all other groups will desire union with it. Not every suitor wins his lady's love by furiously definite and specific iteration of proposal for union. The most successful unions seem to come as each party to the union makes himself or herself worth having on his or her own account.

Let us return again and again to the demand for diversity in the divine kingdom. Marriage itself is aimed not to make

men to resemble women or women to resemble men. Marriage in the true sense makes men more masculine and women more feminine. On the basis of the most thorough merging of two lives each stands out at the end more distinct on its own account. Political unions, of the right sort, by making possible a sharing of effort that can be shared, have left the separate units free to follow their own impulses in their own affairs. Suppose all the States in the American Union were entirely independent of one another. We should have over forty little standing armies, forty lines of custom-houses, forty little national governments. The chief waste then would be in the diversion of effort from the things the people of the separate States could best do separately. It is one of the possibilities of the American system that each State has some room for distinctive political experiment on its own account. So with religious groups. If they could get near enough together to feel oneness at the same time that each tried

to make its distinctive contribution, we would have the ideal religious society.

The difference between bodies of Christians who have come close enough together to feel a common loyalty to Christ is not so much formal and creedal as temperamental. Men feel a lack of something, once they find themselves outside of their own group. They do not feel at home. If we are to deal with the church as a union of groups of human beings, we must not neglect the importance of this feeling. We shall have to leave large liberty to men to do as they please and to find their way about in the church of God. Let no man smile with any trace of superiority over the way another man—his brother—seizes life for his soul. A dear friend of mine used to find comfort in repeating ritualistic phrases that meant nothing to me. I wondered at the strength they brought to him, until I remembered that they were on his father's lips in the instruction of a happy childhood home, and that his mother repeated them as she died. If I am at hand

when the new day of the united church comes, I hope that church will be of such a nature that I can be a Quaker in some moods, sitting silent to await the stirrings of the Spirit, and a ritualist in other moods, entering into a subtle communion with the souls of the past through the use of words dear to that past, and a crusader rejoicing in Christian conquest in other moods still, listening to stories of gains in great cities or in far-away mission fields.

Will such a glad day of union ever come? Why not? If we will continue to work together, to talk together, to pray together, it will some day come as easily and naturally as the ripening of an orchard's fruit. It will be upon us before we know it. The fruit must indeed not be plucked too soon, but the greater danger is in plucking it not soon enough. It is not wise husbandry which allows apples to fall from the trees. Changing the figure of speech, union of churches is like marriage. Premature marriage is perilous, but

wise lovers do not expect to settle everything before the wedding. By the fact that the two are married some agreements are naturally and easily reached which might be cause for endless debate before marriage.

The critic tells us that even after such a new day has dawned there are possibilities of quarrel and split in the church. He calls our attention to the warfare between radicals and conservatives which has always led to schisms in churches and which is especially grievous in some American religious groups to-day. Is not this difference fundamental and inherent? Can the church ever present a peaceful front with this deep-seated human belligerency still marking the lives of church members? Meeting this question with the frankness it deserves, I do not see how we are ever to have a united church except upon the basis of a recognition of the place of both radical and conservative. It has been said that the test of the worth of a socialistic

state, assuming one to come, would be its willingness to have socialism publicly criticized. For example, would the state-owned press of a socialistic state be willing to print a book criticizing the socialistic state? When there is one church, will that one church allow the preaching of beliefs offensive to the majority of the church? Will the conservatives call radicals traitors, and will the radicals retaliate by calling the conservatives mossbacks? That is the unfortunate terminology which the outside world hears to-day as it turns toward the church.

All this must be kept on the human basis, and upon the platform of respect for every man who is seeking to live in the spirit of Christ. It is not to be assumed that any man who has taken on himself the vows of Christ will lightly violate those vows. By an odd chain of circumstances my life in the Methodist ministry has brought me into close touch with the three or four Methodists in my day who have been called heretics. The sobering re-

flection that comes to me when I am tempted to call anybody a heretic is that these three or four men are those whose memory I most cherish for the sheer saintliness of their lives. It is a wise provision in some ecclesiastical bodies which provides that a minister charged with heresy can be tried only by a group of fellow-ministers to whose circle he immediately belongs. We cannot judge heretics apart from their lives. A church that names the name of Christ does not have the privilege of a club or a party to cast out those whom she disapproves. The worst calamity which could befall a church would be to vote so as to make the Christ-life practically a heresy.

On the other hand, the conservative serves the kingdom of heaven by holding forth as long as he can a view that may be passing away. If we are to judge beliefs by their usefulness, a belief may be useful long after masses of men have ceased to believe it. It may still minister to some. In any case it may be presented

with such force that the essential truth in it is made to count. By opposing the old to the new the conservative slows down the rush of a new idea, gives the church time to make its adjustment, compels the new force to take the old force into itself, with a change of direction quite likely closer to the truth. If we can make place in the church to-day for radicals and conservatives to live together in good-will though in wide intellectual disagreement, we shall have set before the world, puzzled as to how men can live together, an object-lesson in living together of value for all social groups, industrial, national, and racial.

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